

冒険工ノキル島

Wandering Island

鶴田謙二

Kenji Tsuruta



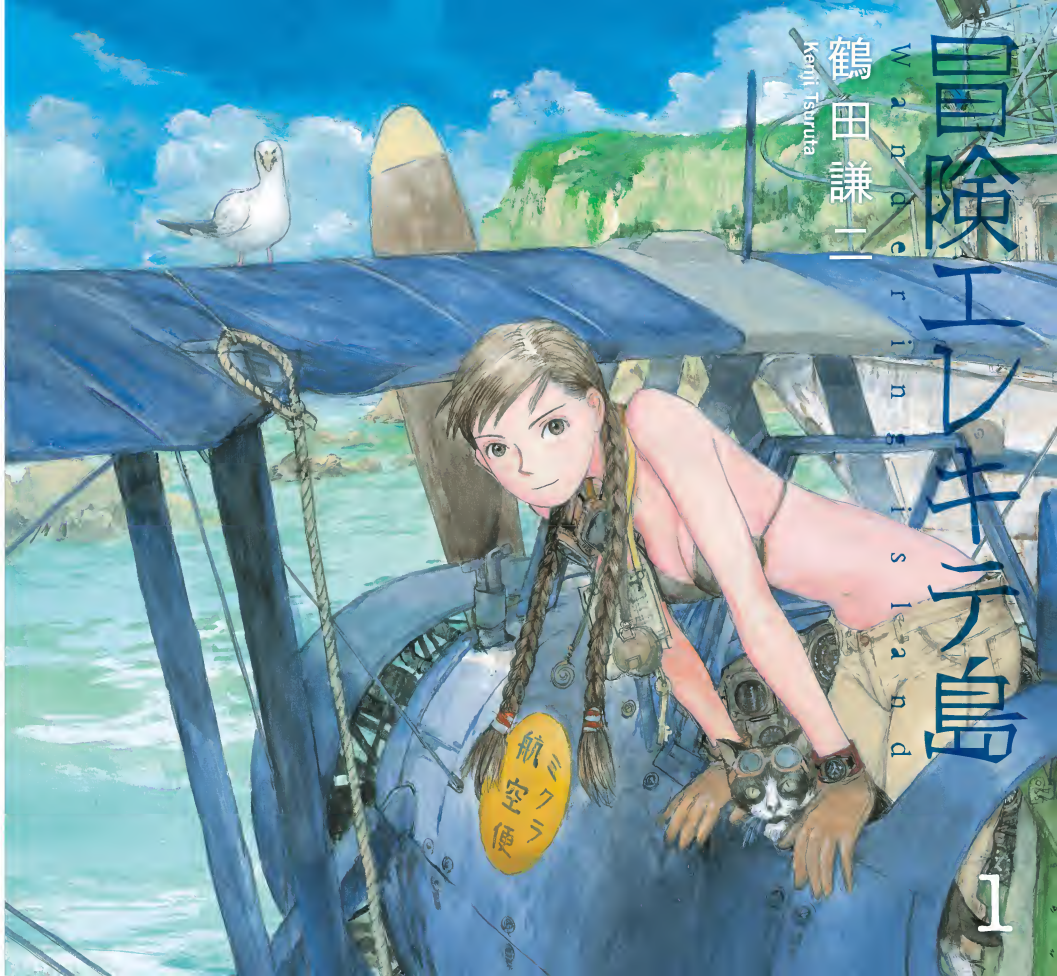
1

冒険エレン島

W a n d e r i n g I s l a n d

鶴田 謙一

Kenji Isumata



冒險エレキテ島

W a n d e r i n g i s l a n d

鷗田謙二

1



Story and Art by
KENJI TSURUTA

Translation by
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SUSIE LEE AND BETTY DONG WITH TOM2K



DARK HORSE MANGA

Tokyo

Yokosuka
pg. 131

Oshima
Airport
pg. 11

Izu
Oshima

Port Habu
pg. 85

Toshima

Nijima

Kozushima

Miyakejima

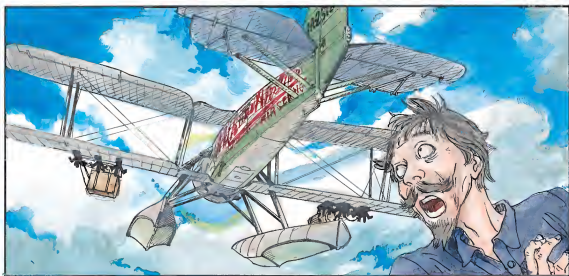
Mikurajima
pg. 122

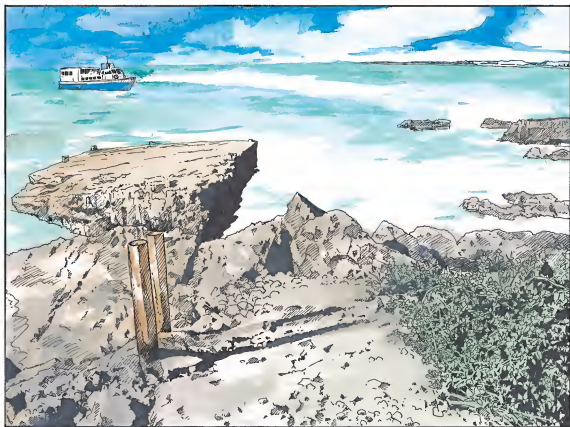
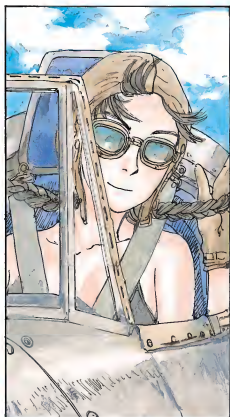
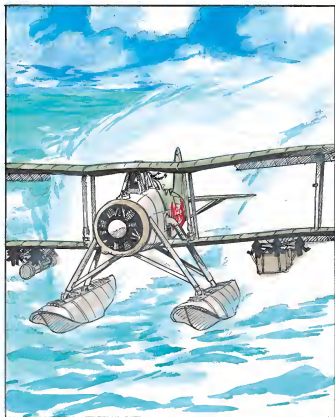
Mikura
Air
Service

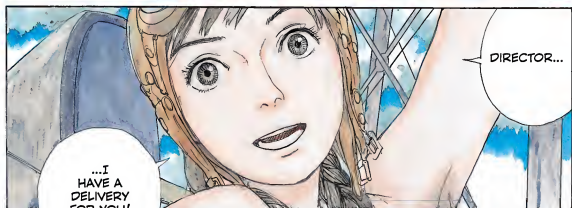
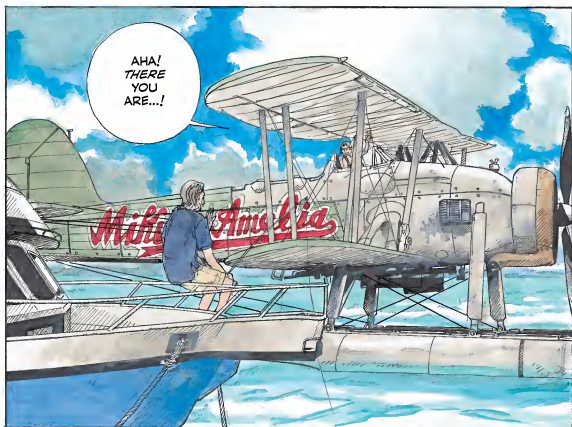
Places
seen in
this story

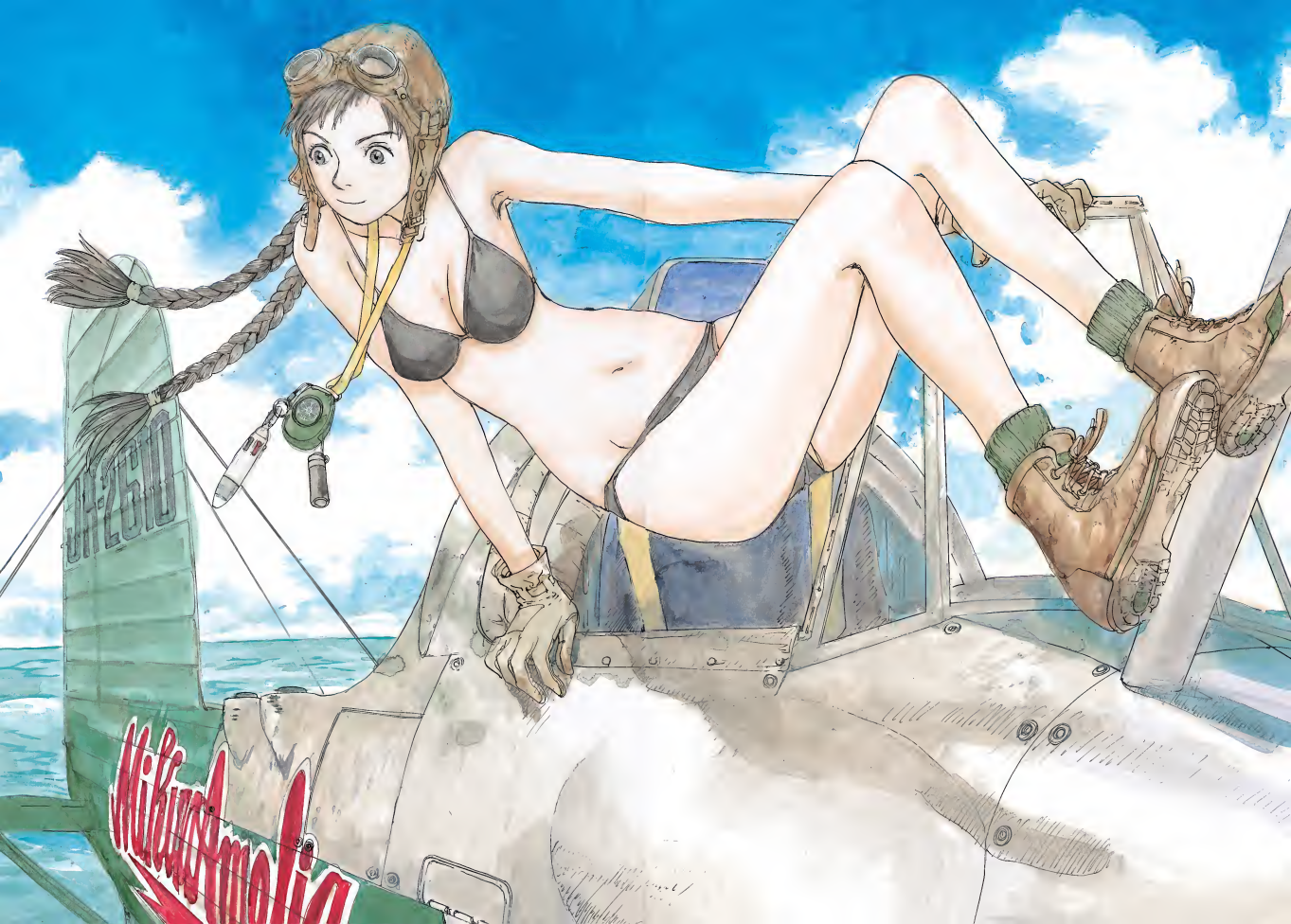


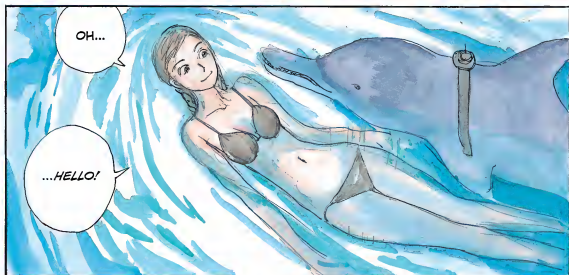
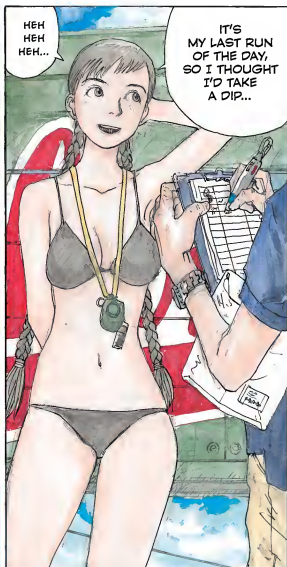
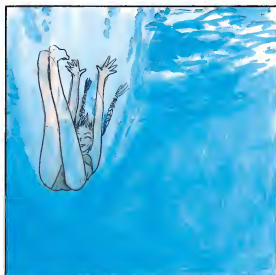
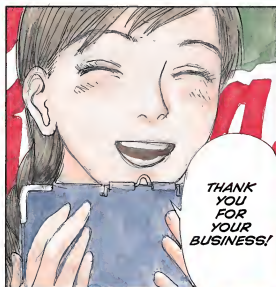
Mikura Air Service delivers as far
as the Ogasawara Islands, 480 mi
(772 km) to the SSE

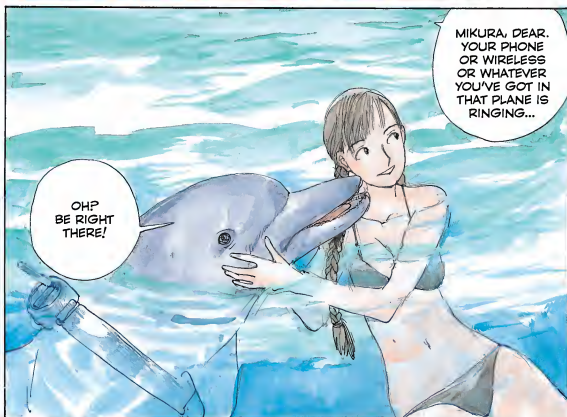
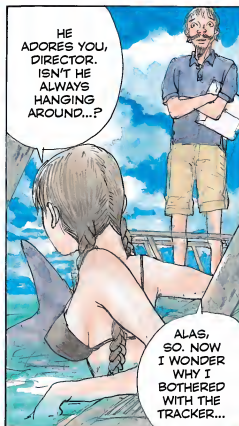
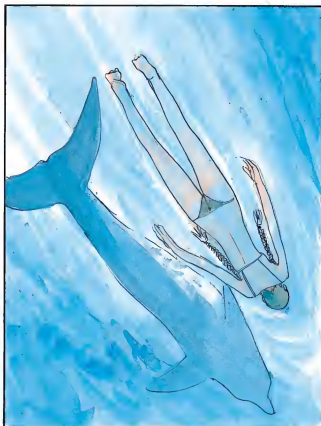


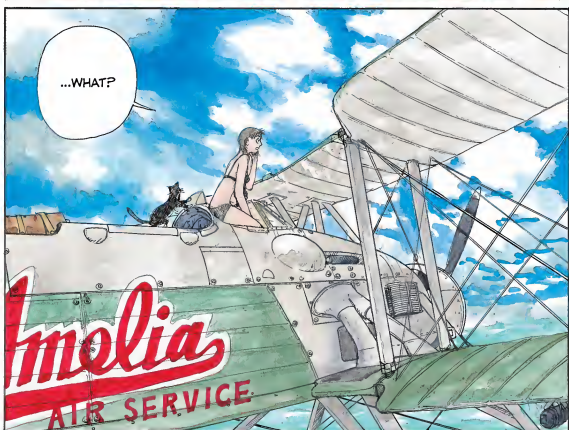
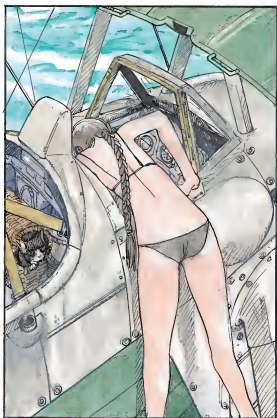
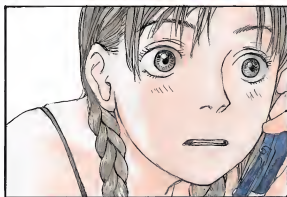
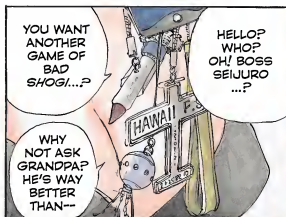


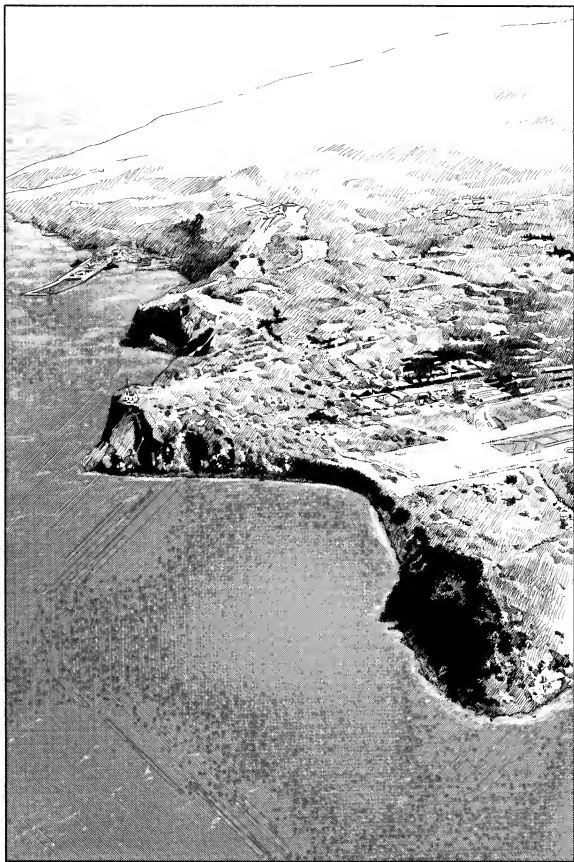




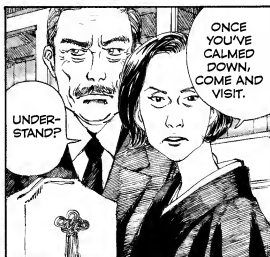


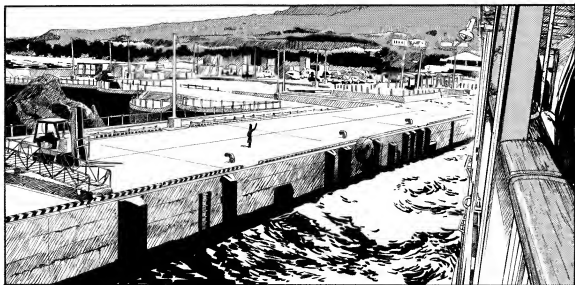


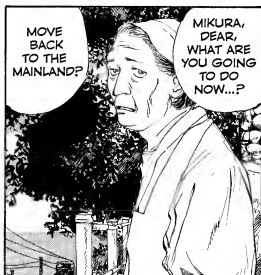


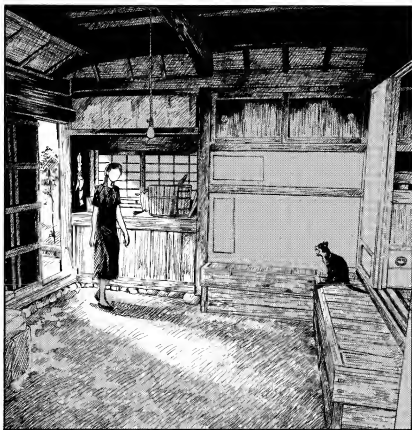
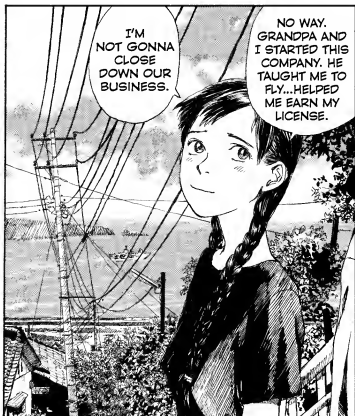




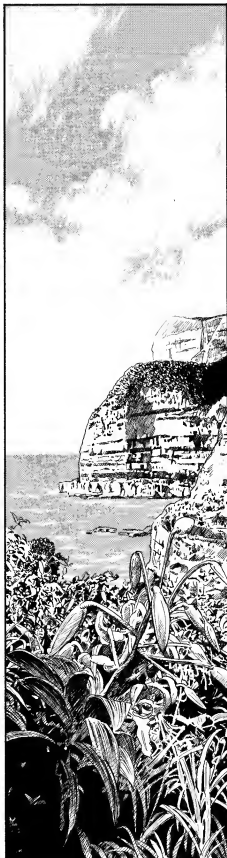


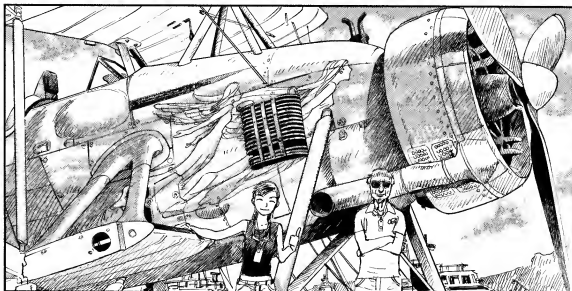


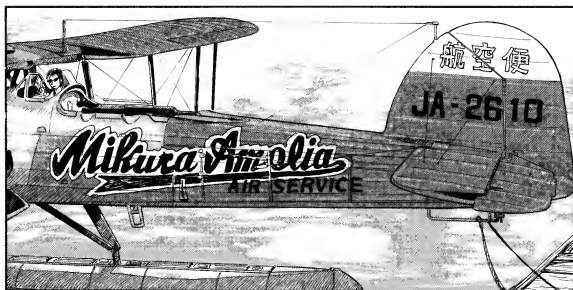


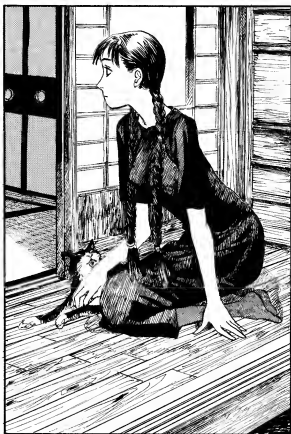
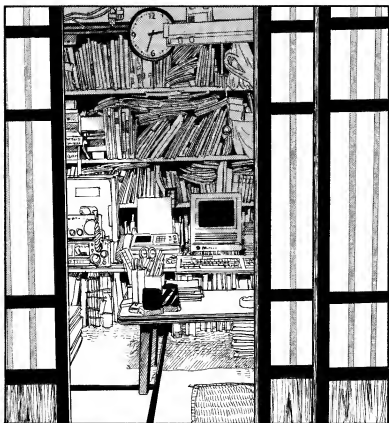


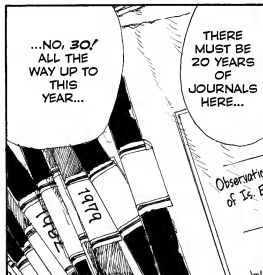
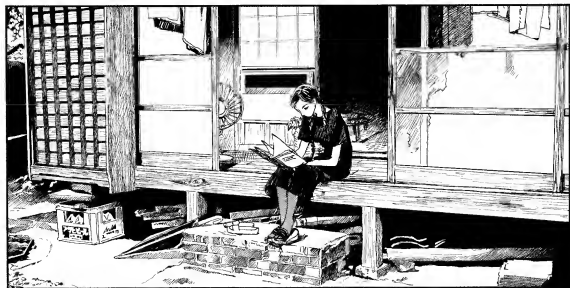
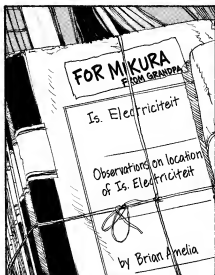


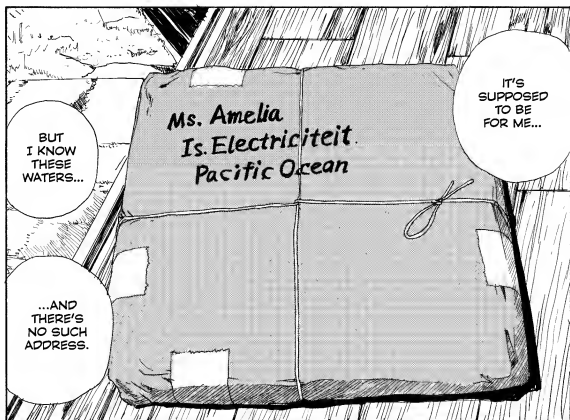


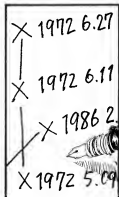
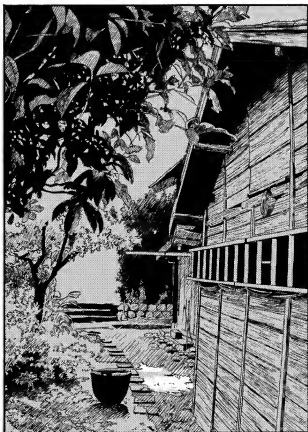


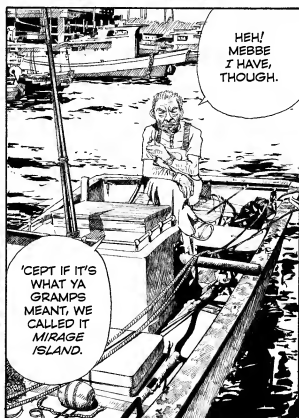


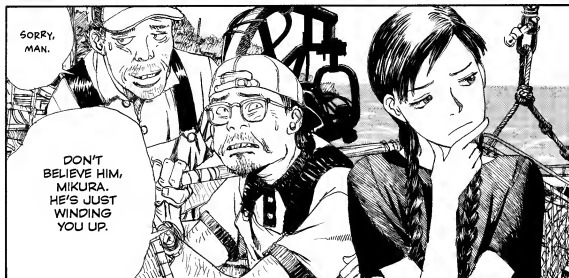
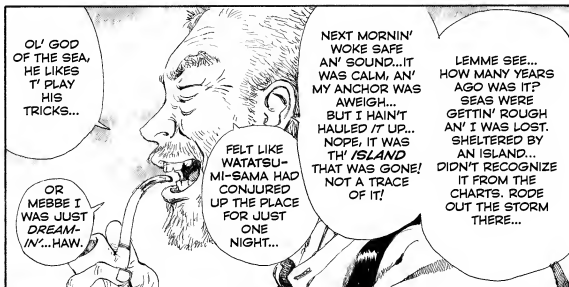


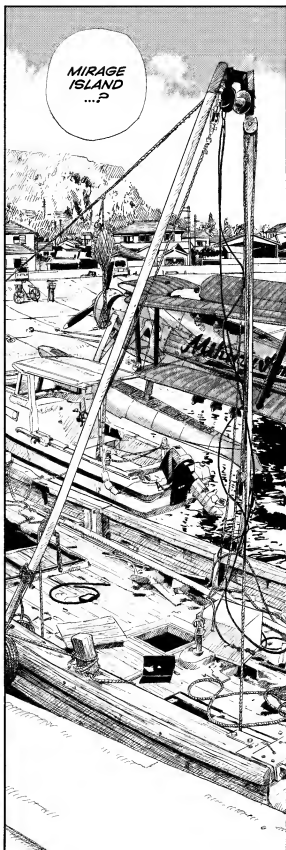
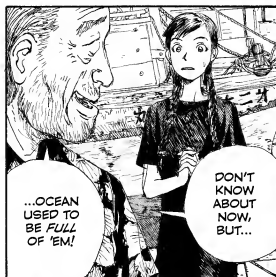
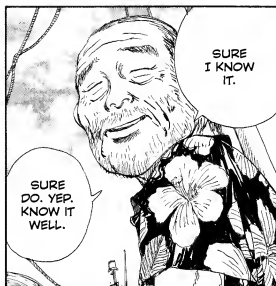


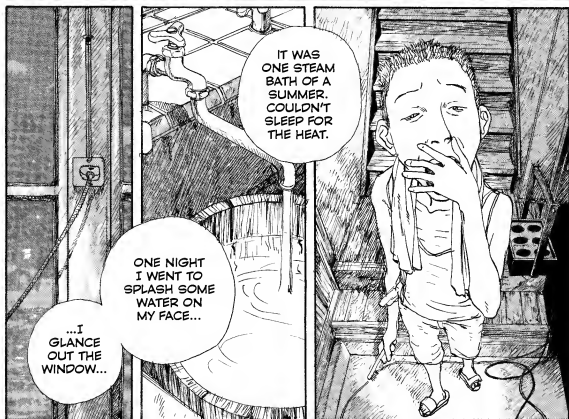


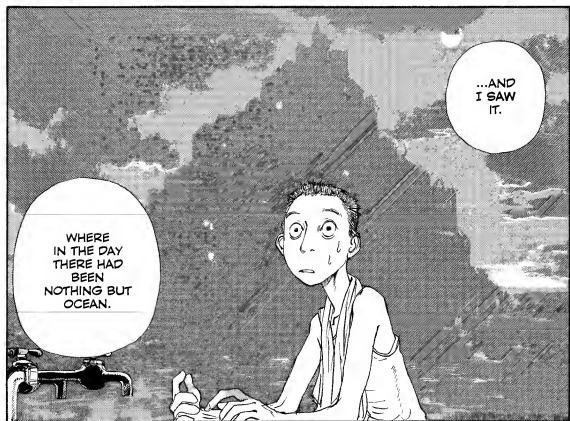
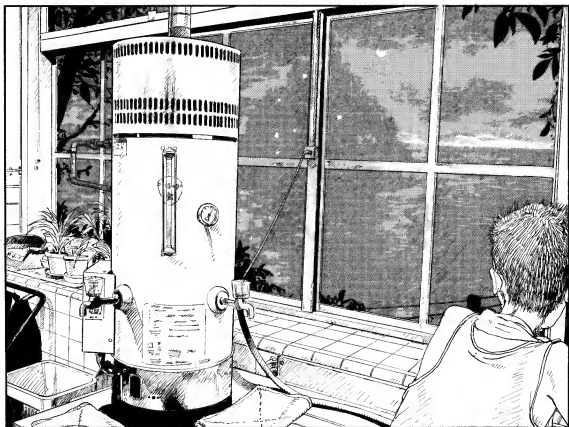


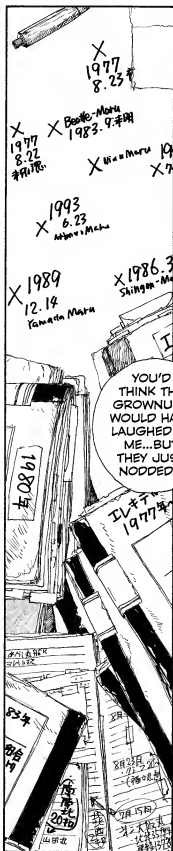


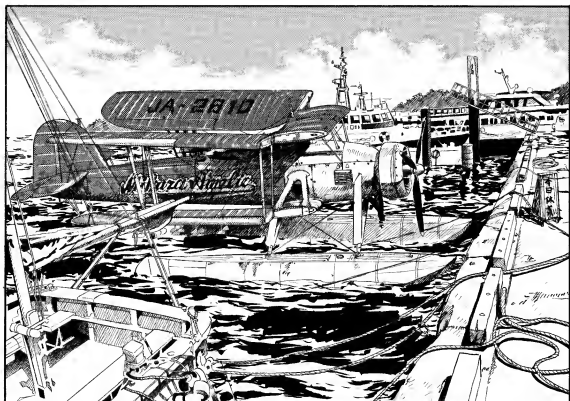


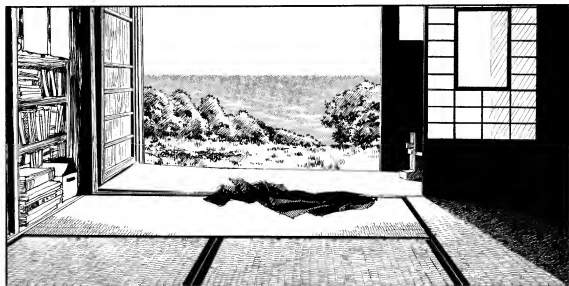
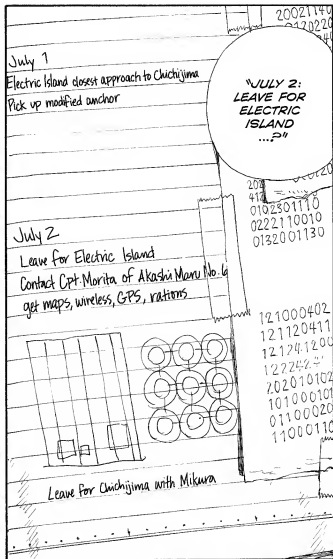


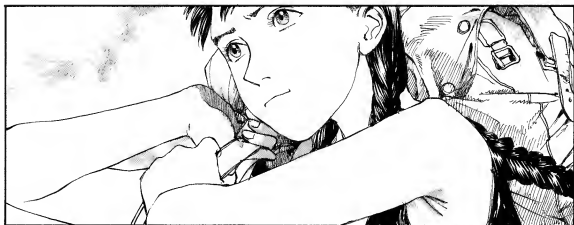


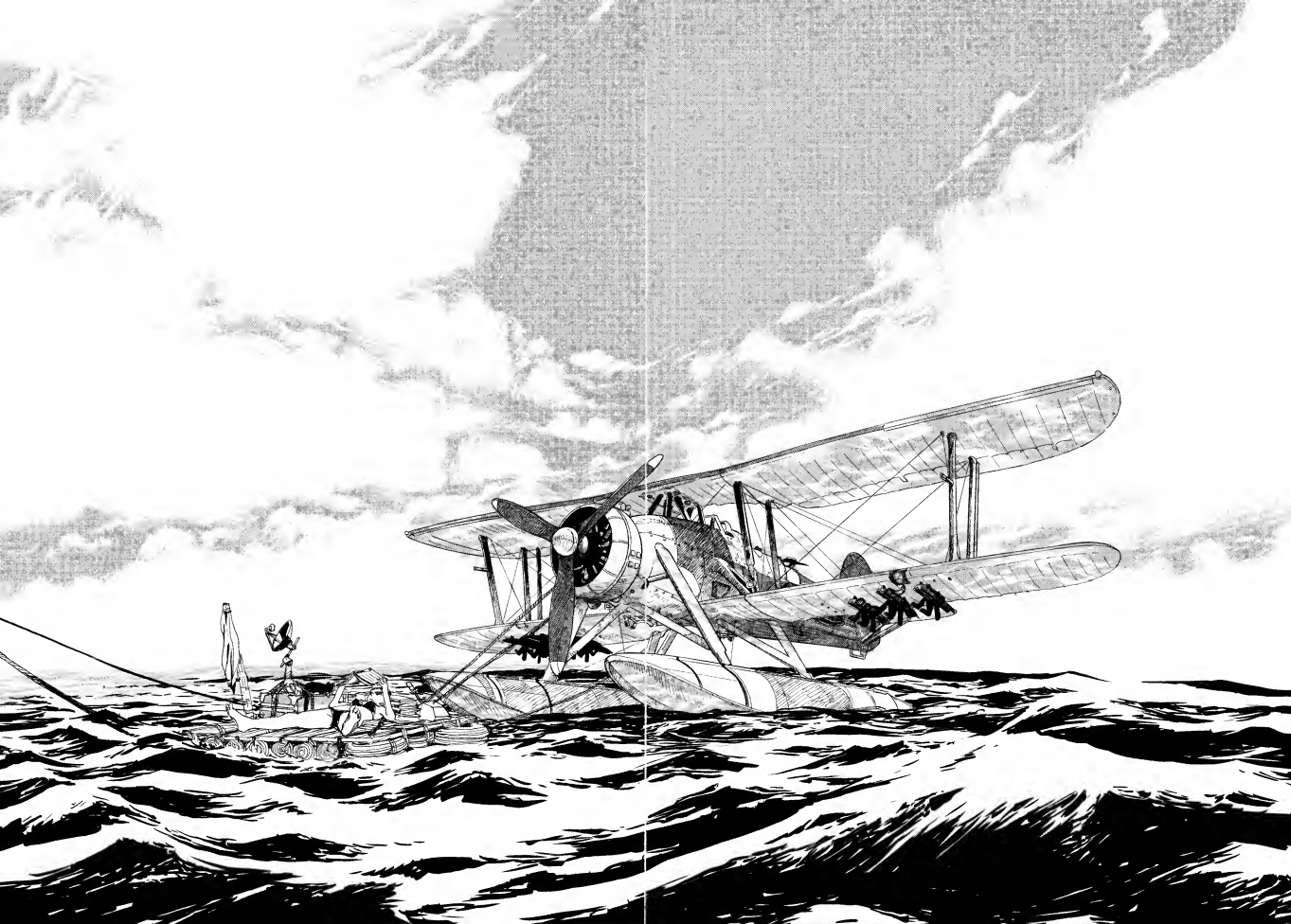


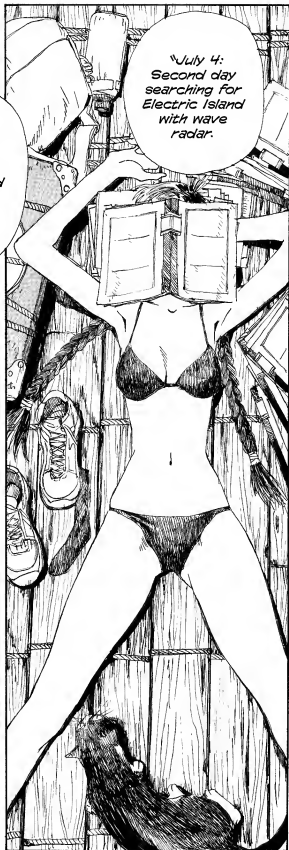






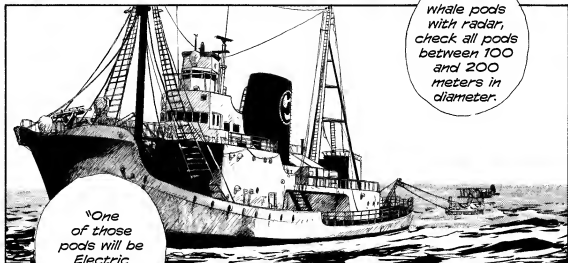






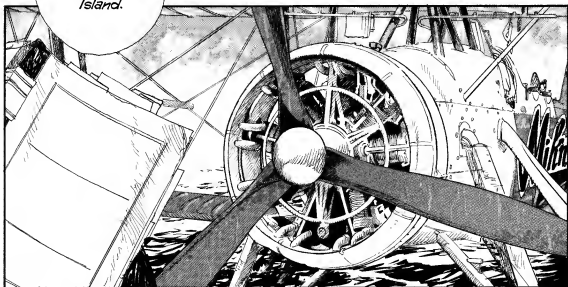


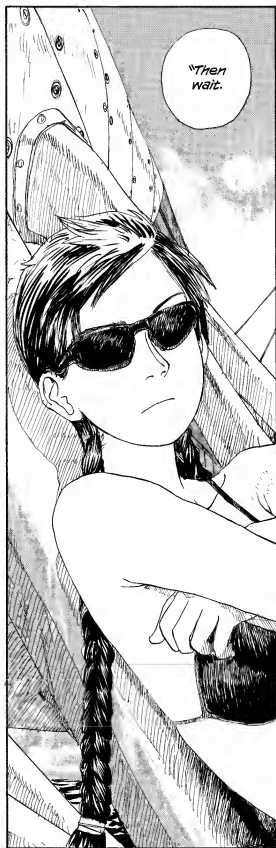
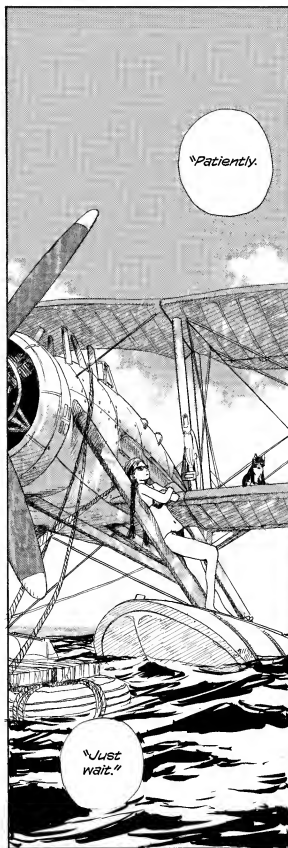
July 5:
Third day.
Electric Island's
closest
approach to
Torishima
from the
south.

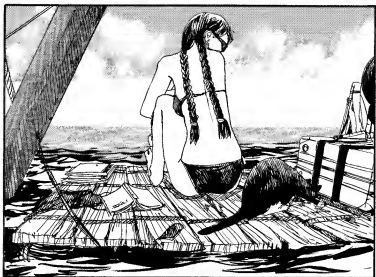
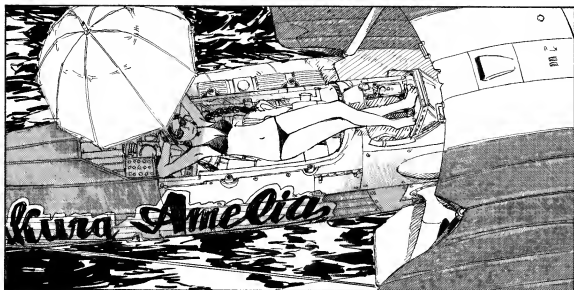


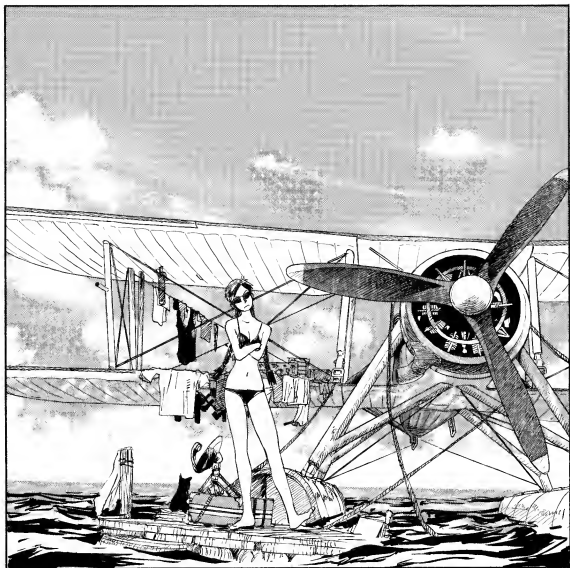
Locate
whale pods
with radar,
check all pods
between 100
and 200
meters in
diameter.

One
of those
pods will be
Electric
Island.





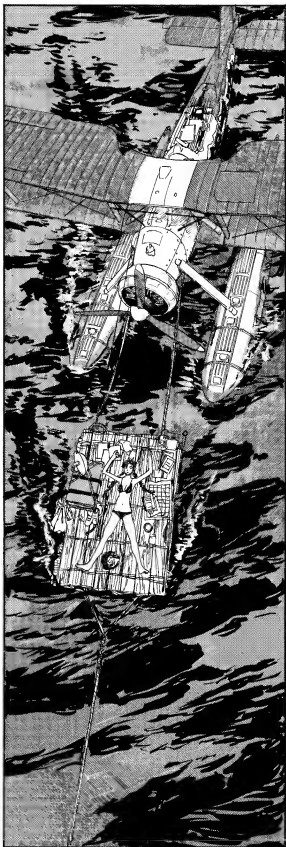
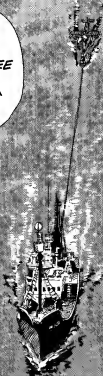


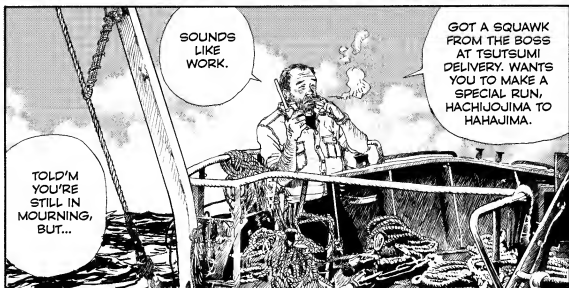
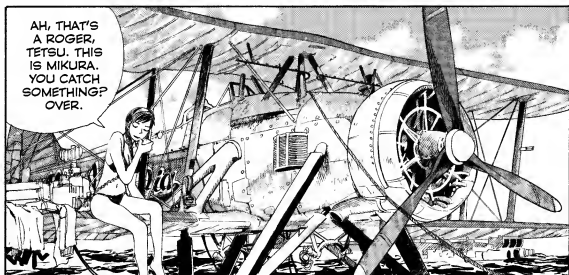
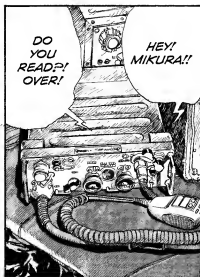


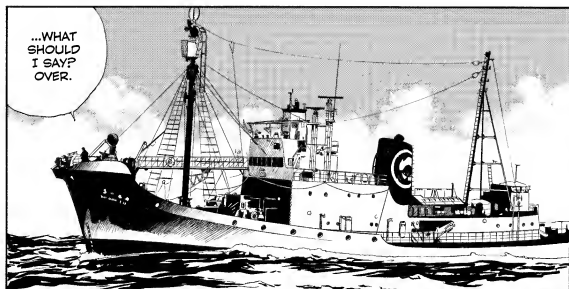
MIKURA'S
LOG.
JULY 5.
CLEAR.

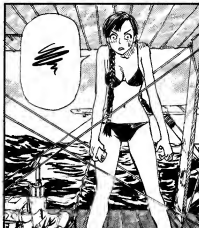
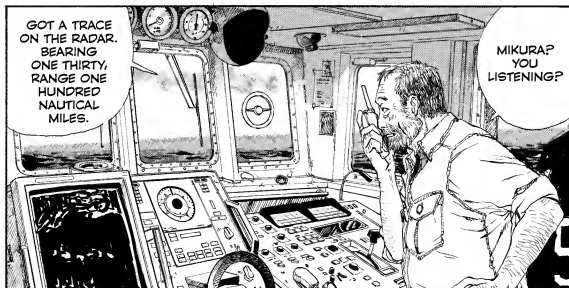
MADE
RENDEZVOUS
WITH TETSU
THE RADAR MAN
AND NOW
CRUISING OFF
TORISHIMA...
OR, MORE LIKE
DRIFTING
SOUTH.

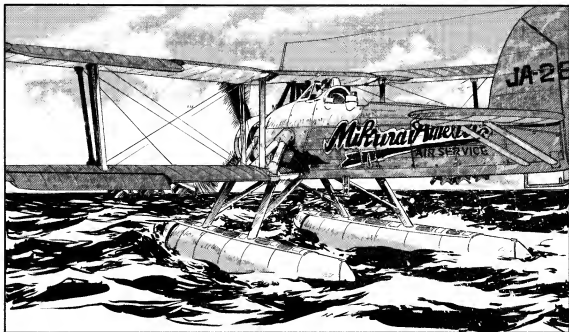
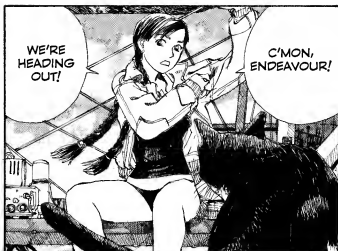
IT'S
ALREADY
BEEN *THREE*
DAYS,
GRANDPA
...!

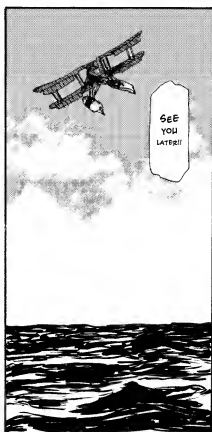
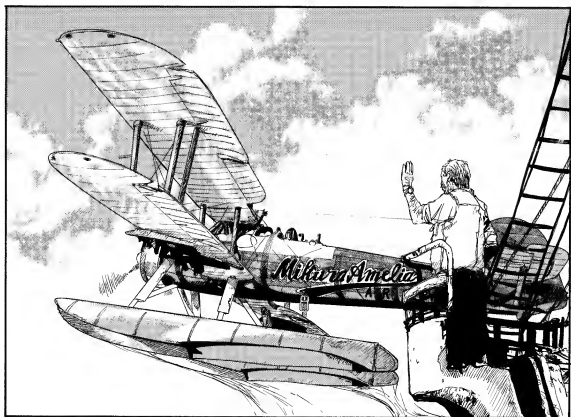


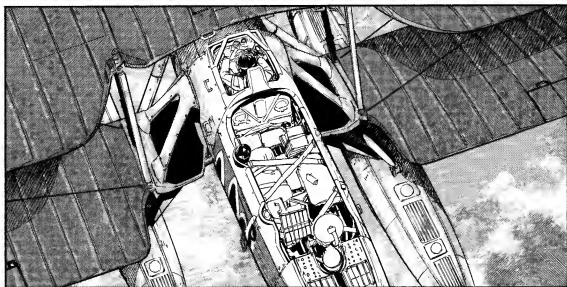


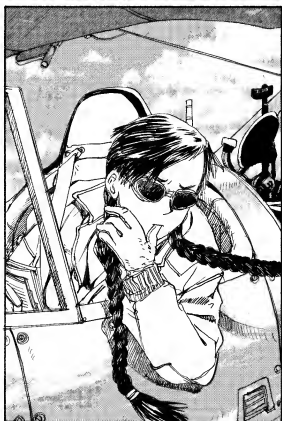
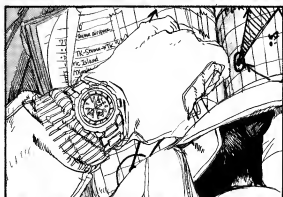
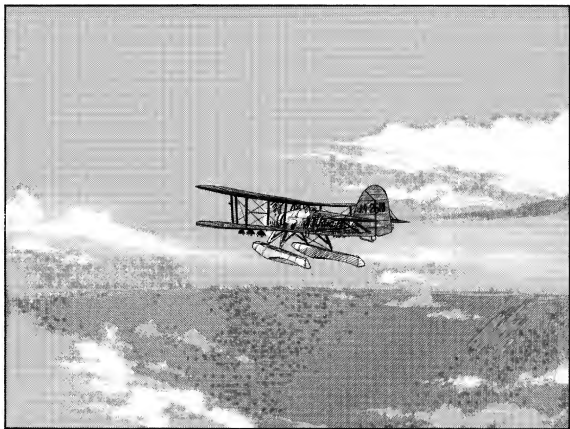


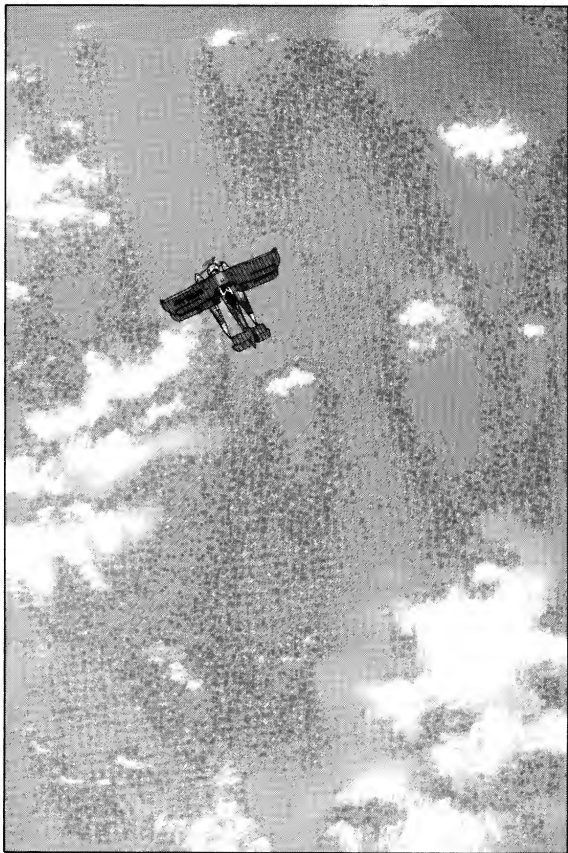


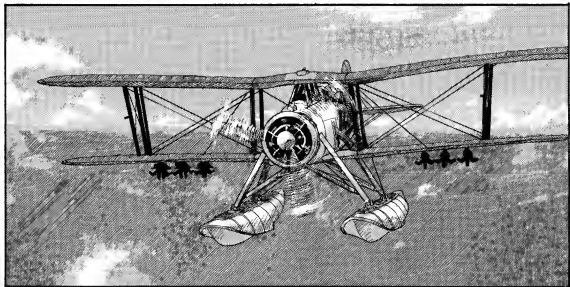


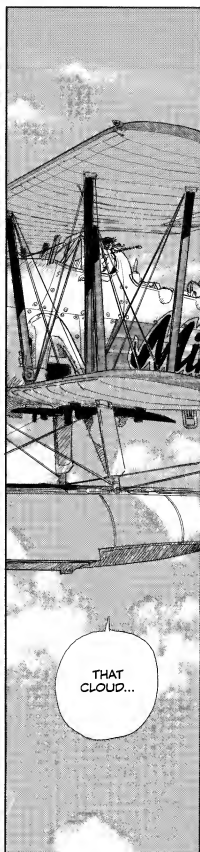
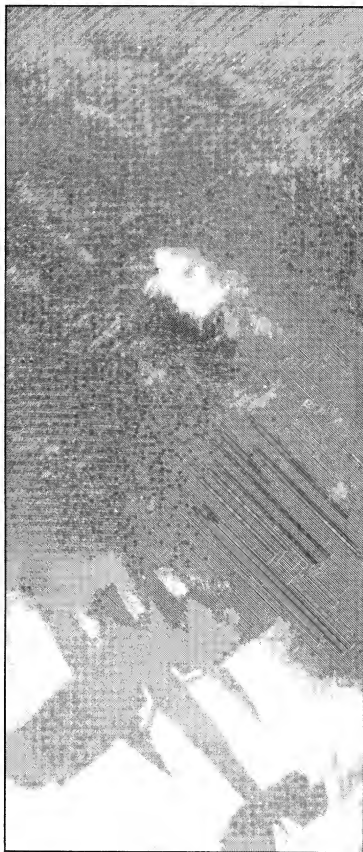






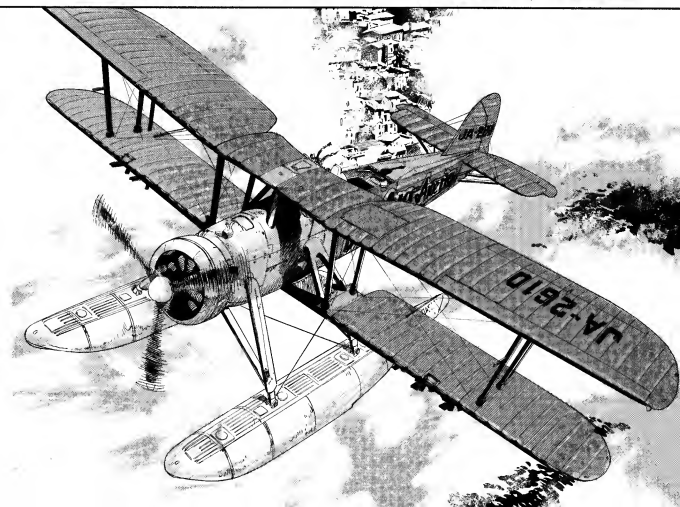
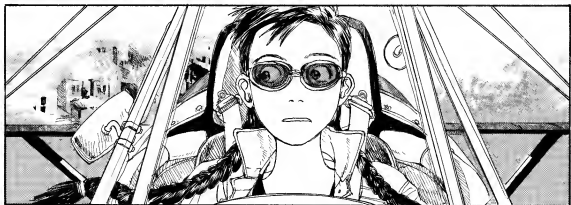


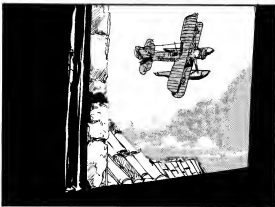
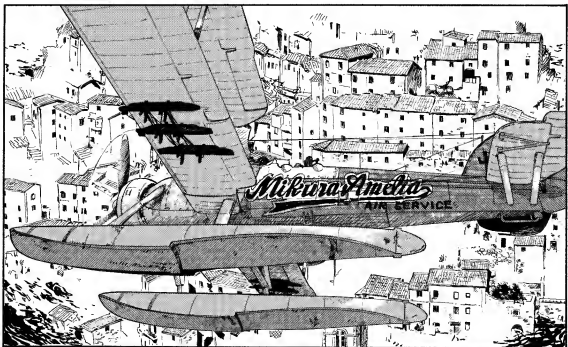
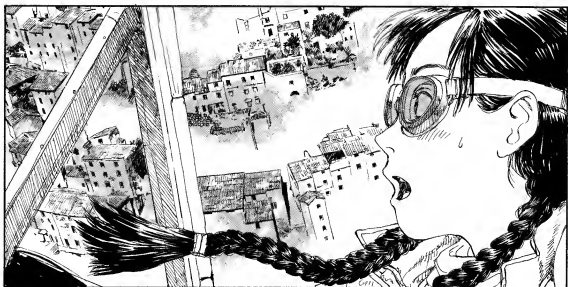


















IT'S
ELECTRIC
ISLAND...

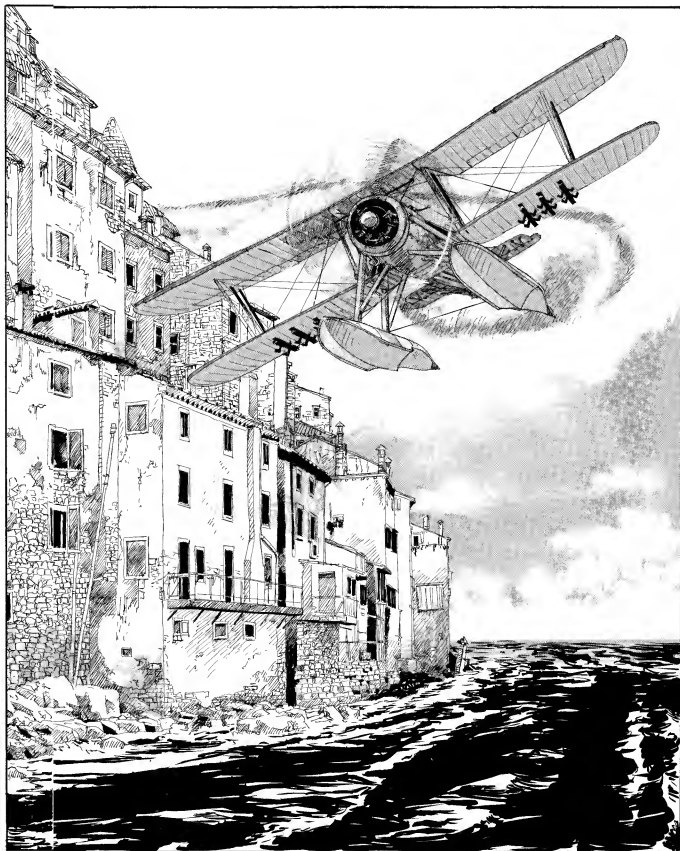
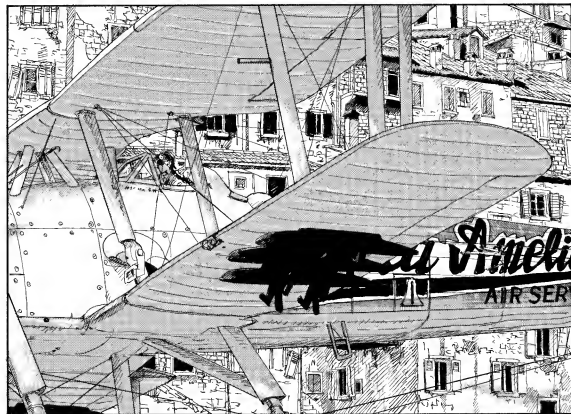


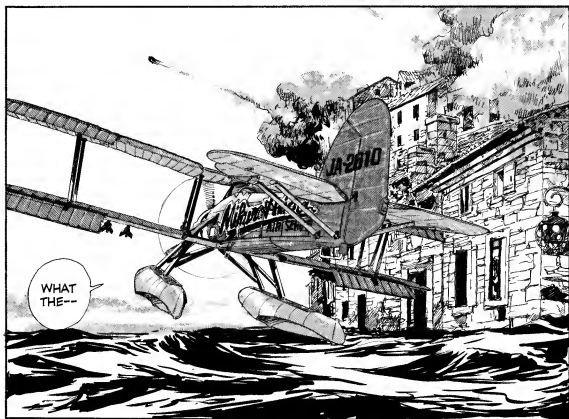
ELECTRIC
ISLAND
...!

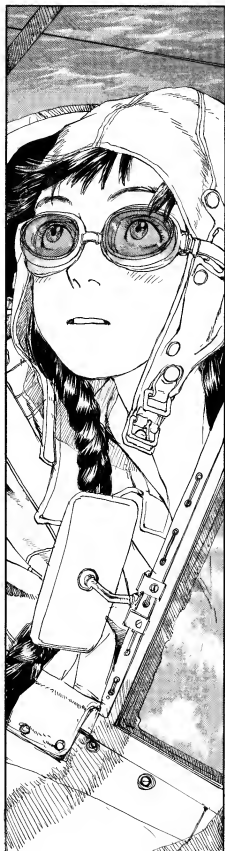


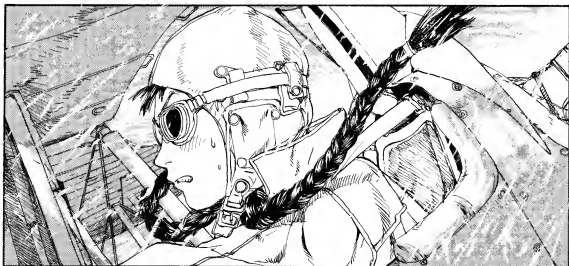
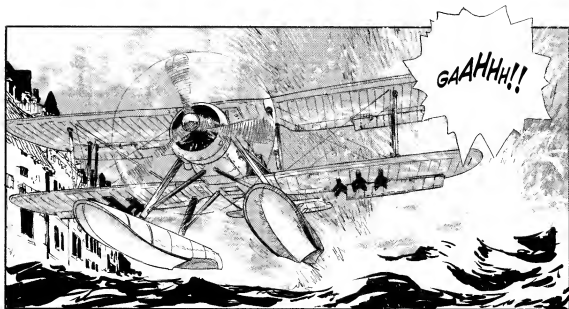
ELECTRIC
ISLAND
!!

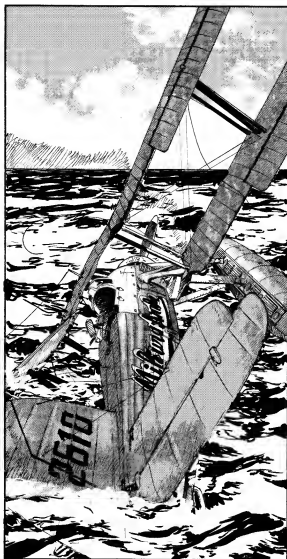
IT'S
REAL!
IT
REALLY
DOES
EXIST!



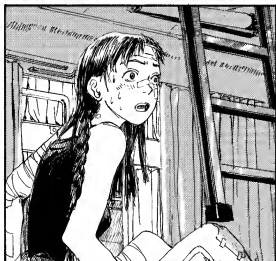


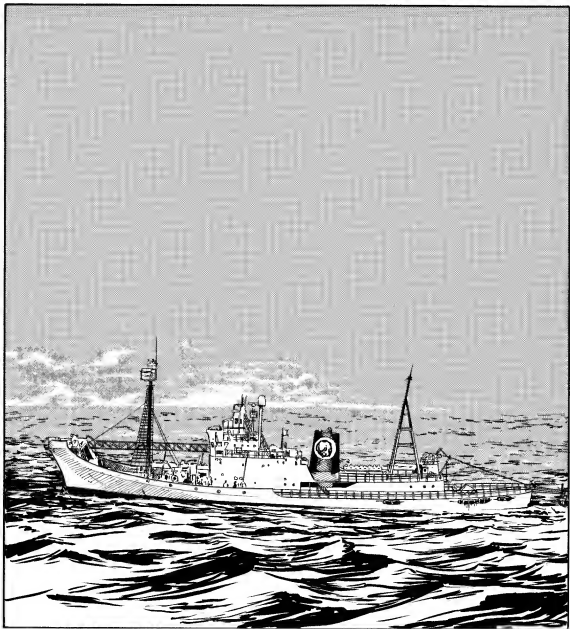
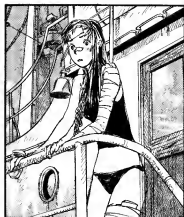


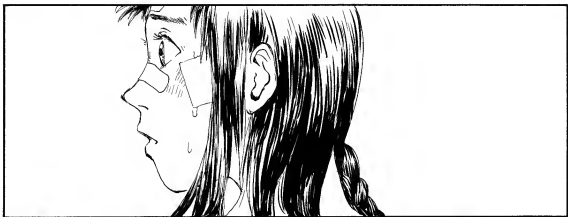


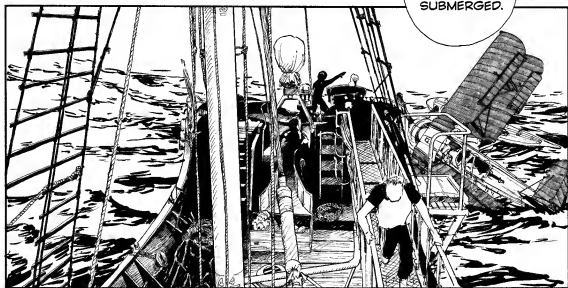
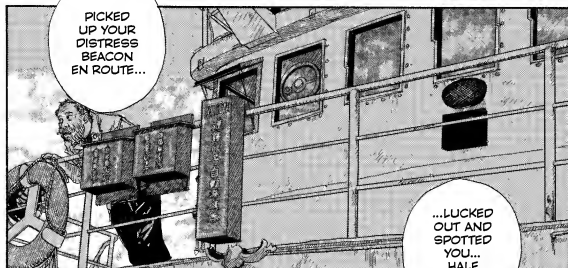


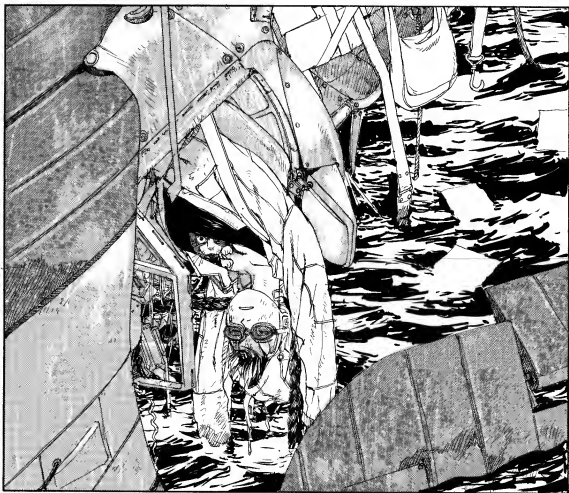






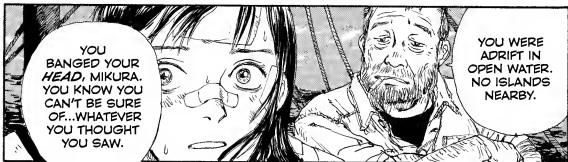






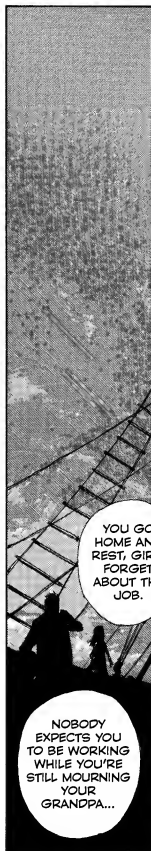
WHAT
HAPPENED
TO
**ELECTRIC
ISLAND**
...?!

AND
**ELECTRIC
ISLAND**
...?!



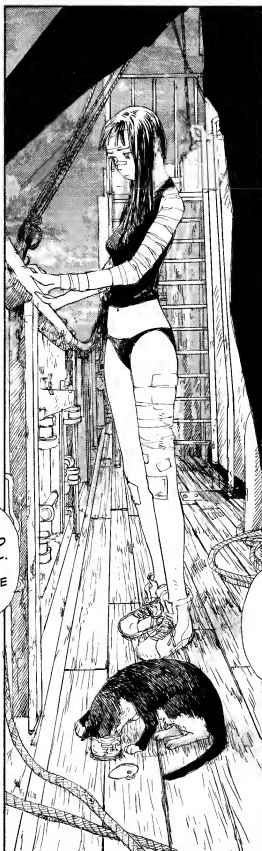
YOU
BANGED YOUR
HEAD, MIKURA.
YOU KNOW YOU
CAN'T BE SURE
OF...WHATEVER
YOU THOUGHT
YOU SAW.

YOU WERE
ADRIPT IN
OPEN WATER.
NO ISLANDS
NEARBY.

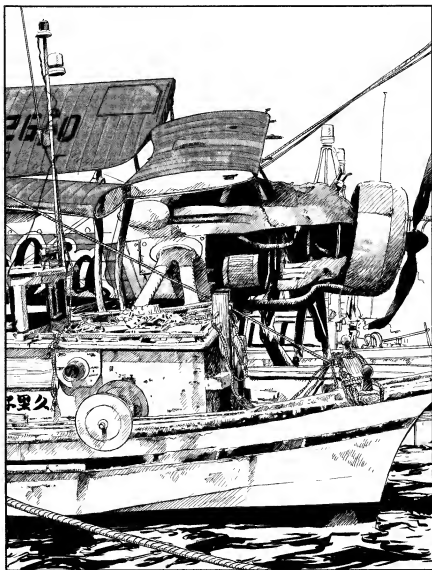


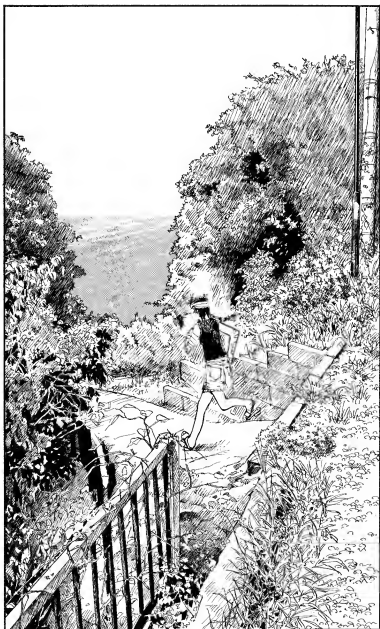
YOU GO
HOME AND
REST, GIRL.
FORGET
ABOUT THE
JOB.

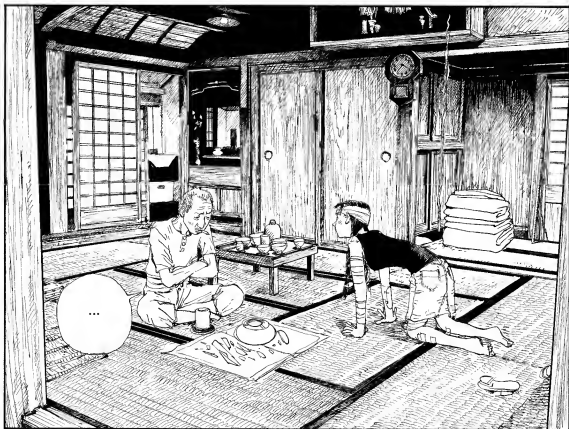
NOBODY
EXPECTS YOU
TO BE WORKING
WHILE YOU'RE
STILL MOURNING
YOUR
GRANDPA...

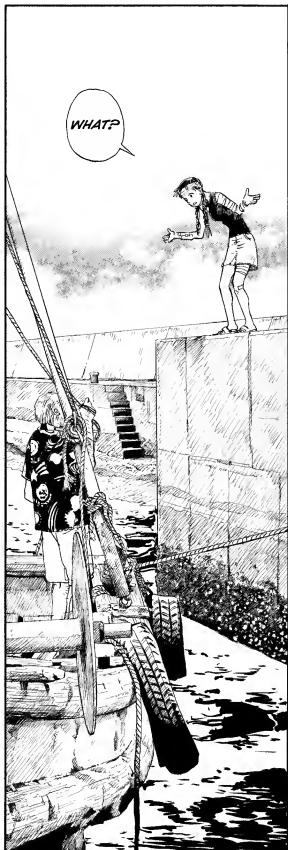
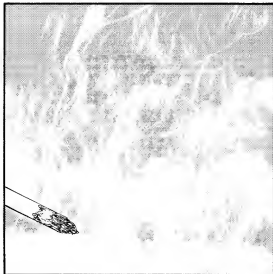


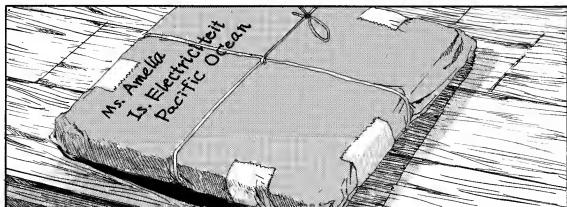
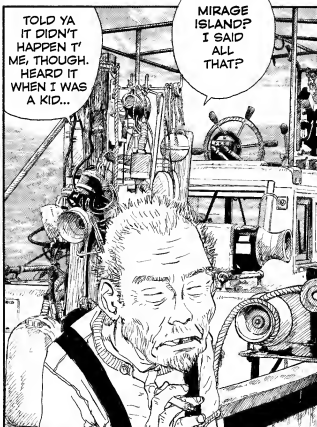
I...
I GUESS
SO...

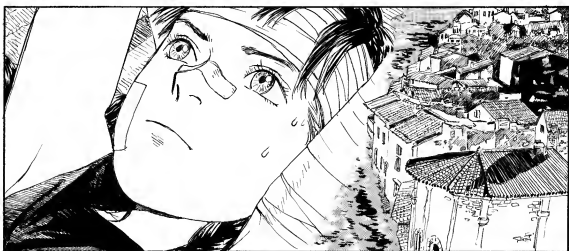
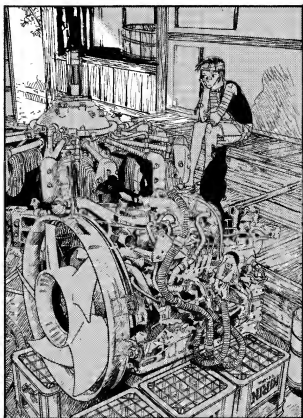


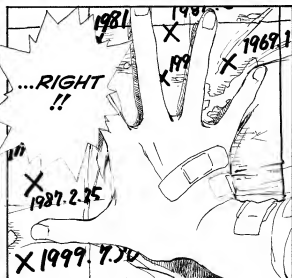
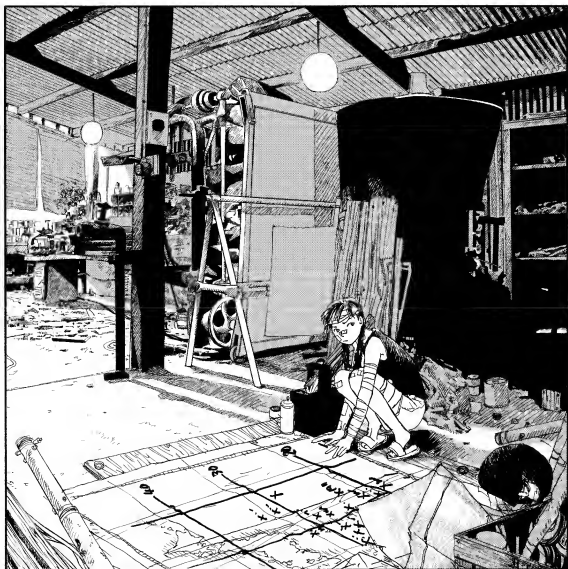








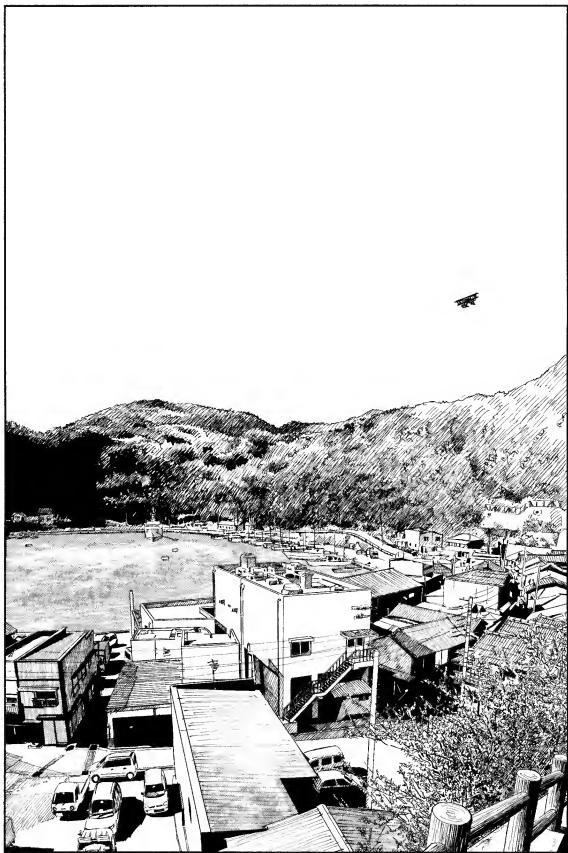




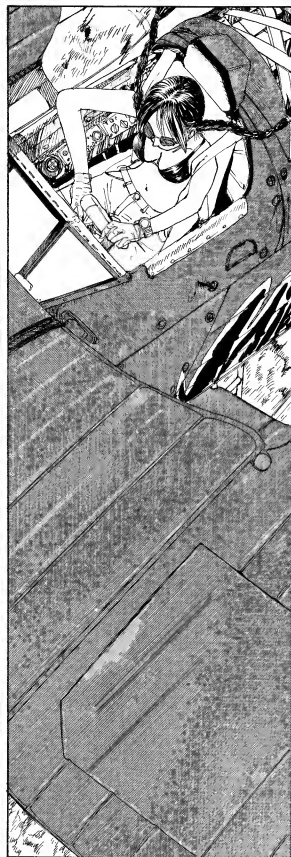
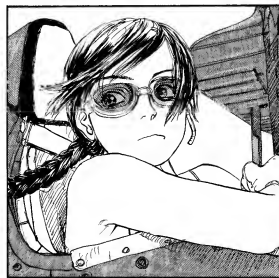
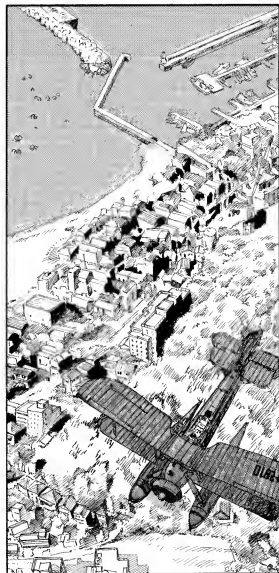
W a n d e r i n g i s l a n d
冒険エレキテ島

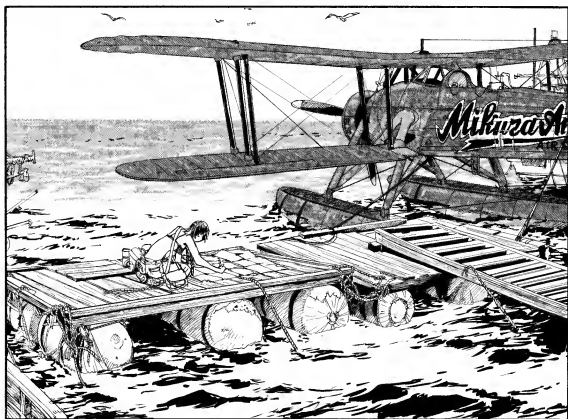
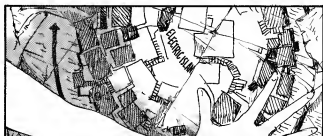


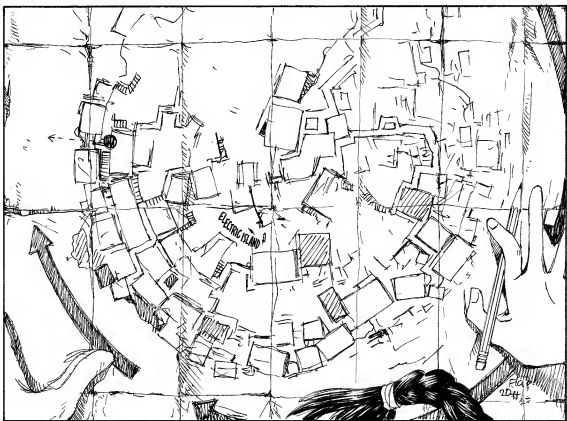


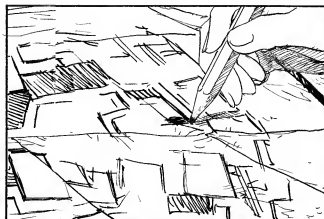
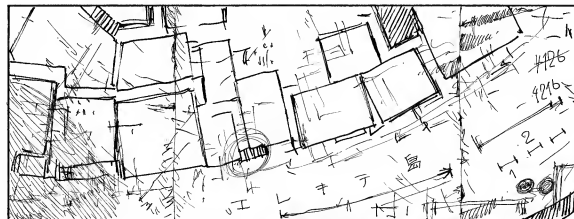


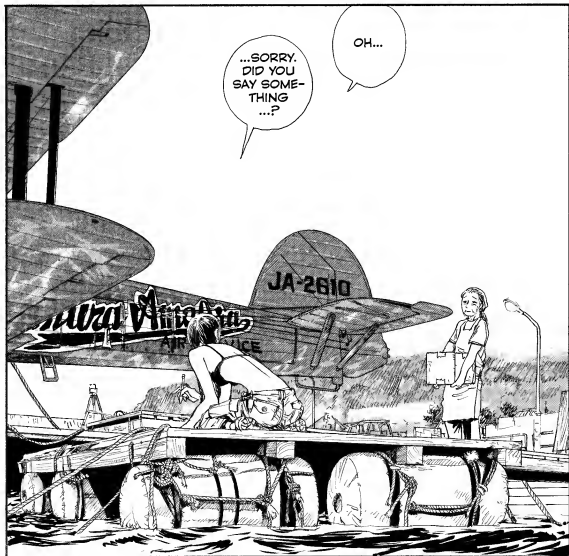
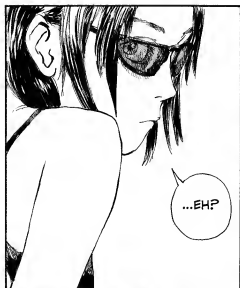


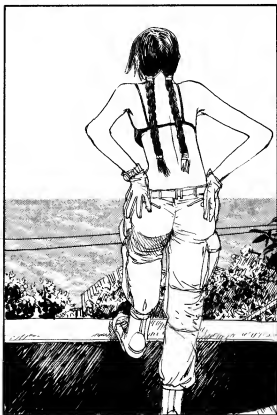
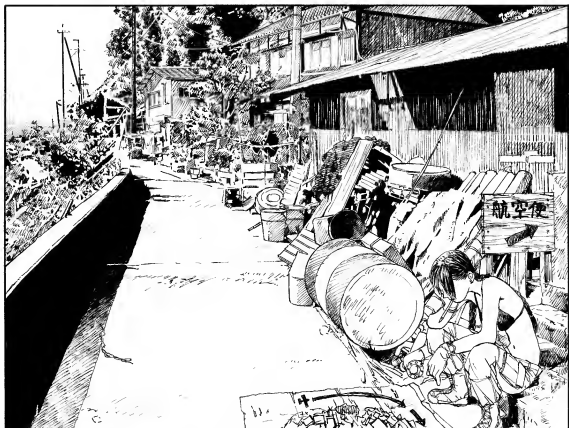


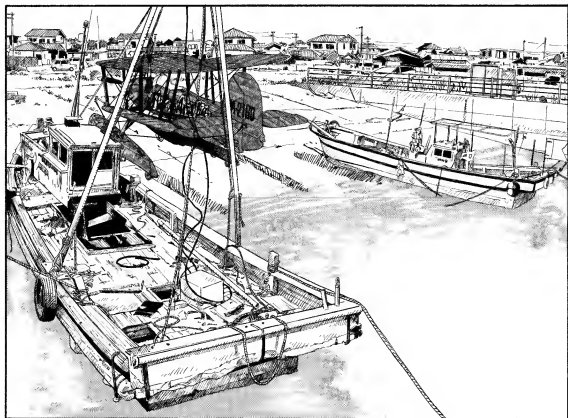
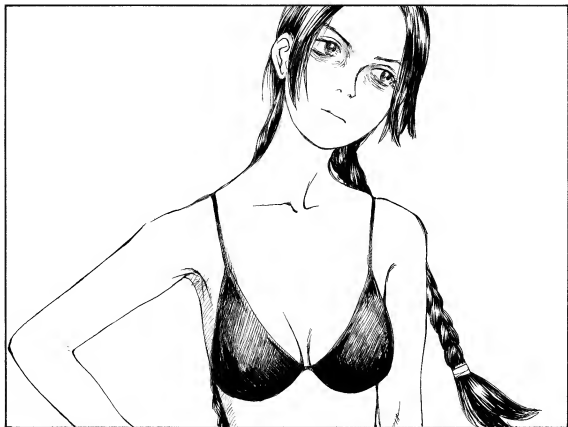




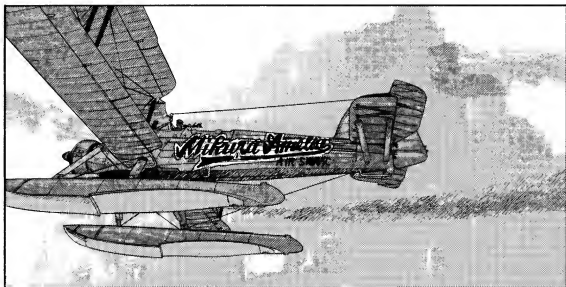


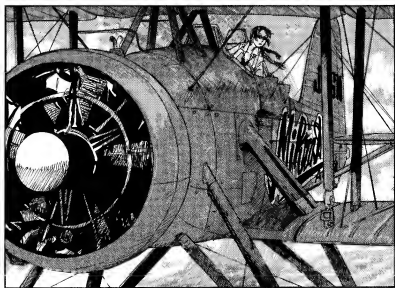
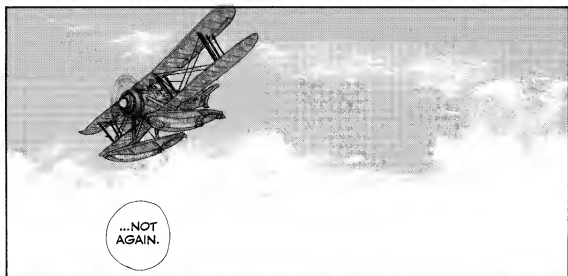


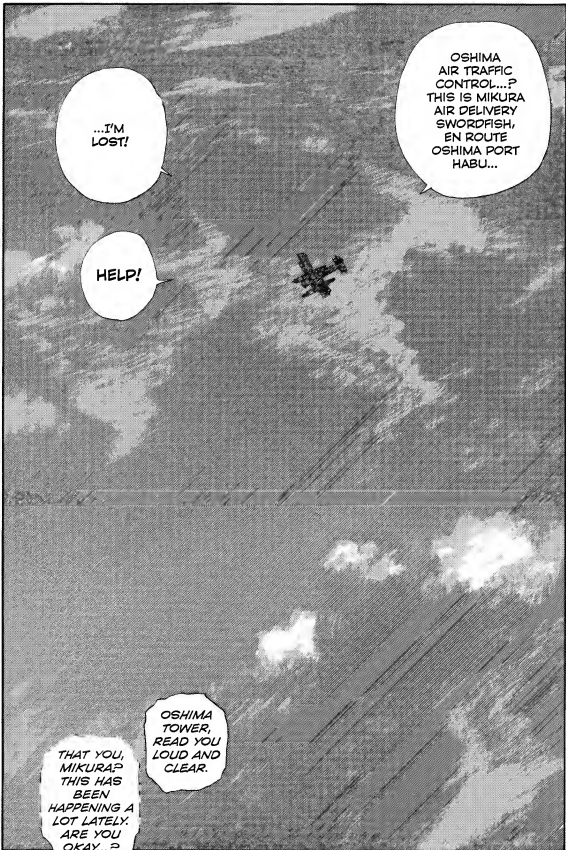












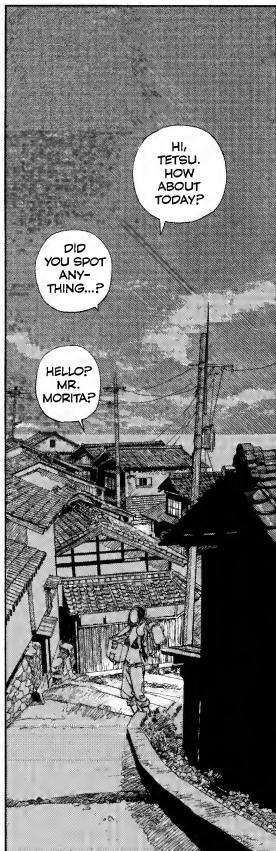
...I'M
LOST!

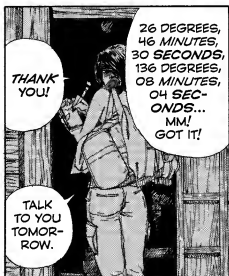
HELP!

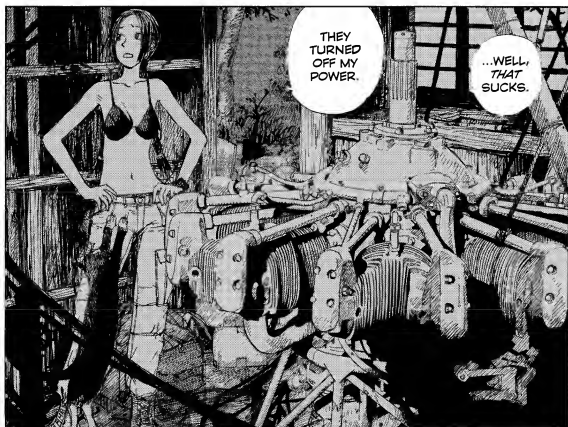
OSHIMA
AIR TRAFFIC
CONTROL...?
THIS IS MIKURA
AIR DELIVERY
SWORDFISH,
EN ROUTE
OSHIMA PORT
HABU...

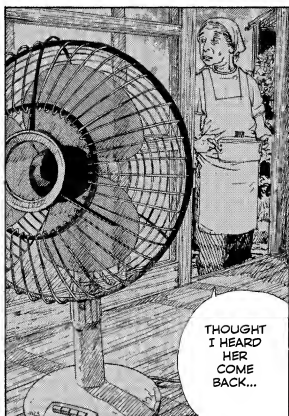
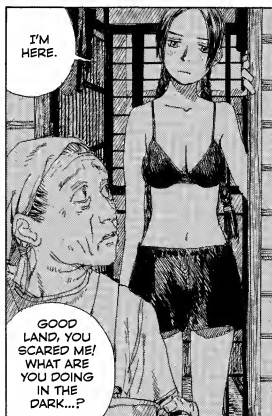
THAT YOU,
MIKURAP
THIS HAS
BEEN
HAPPENING A
LOT LATELY.
ARE YOU
OKAY...?

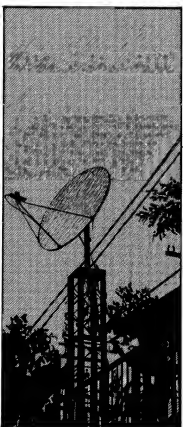
OSHIMA
TOWER,
READ YOU
LOUD AND
CLEAR.

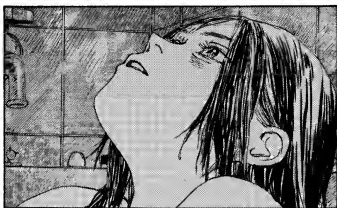
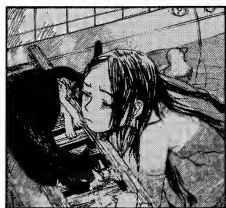
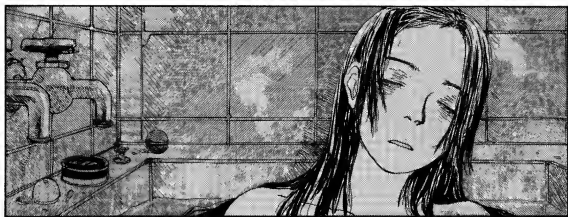


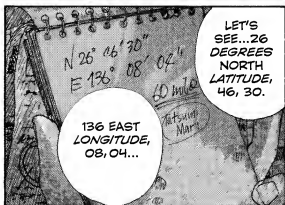
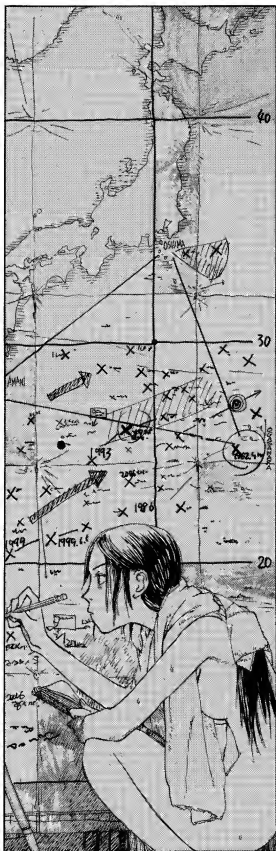


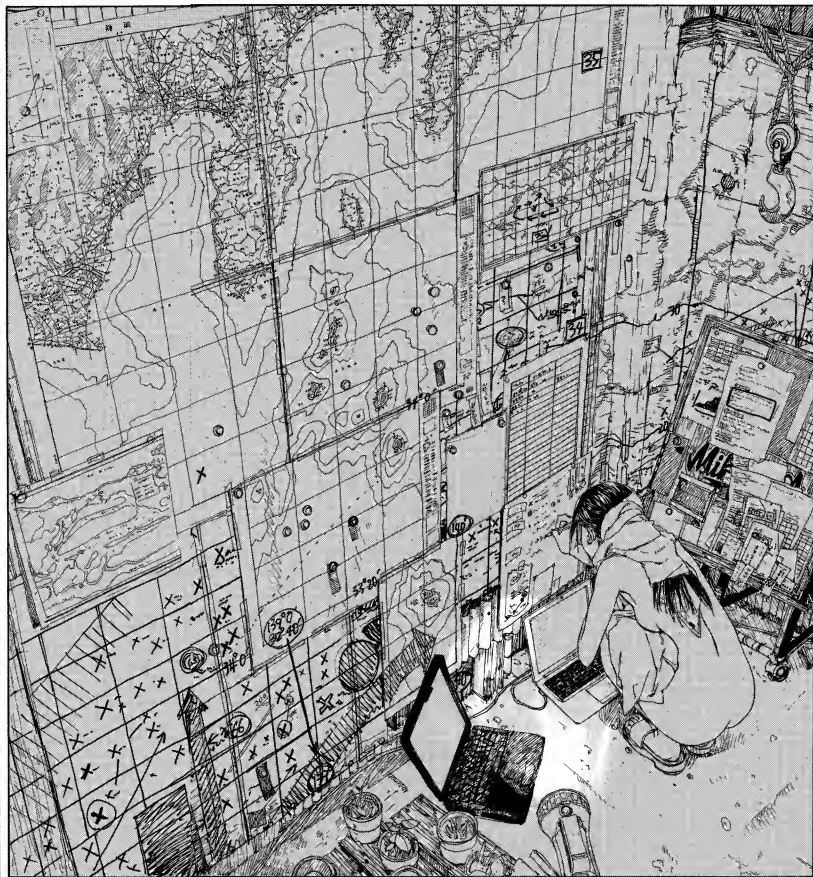


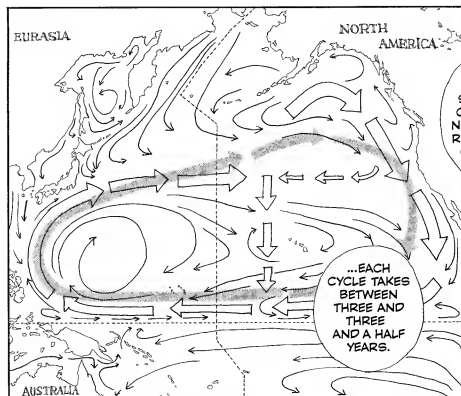






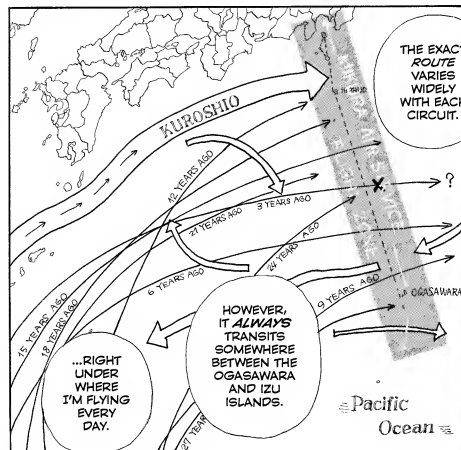






ELECTRIC ISLAND SEEMS TO BE CIRCLING THE NORTH PACIFIC, RIDING ON THE CURRENTS...

...EACH CYCLE TAKES BETWEEN THREE AND THREE AND A HALF YEARS.



THE EXACT ROUTE VARIES WIDELY WITH EACH CIRCUIT.

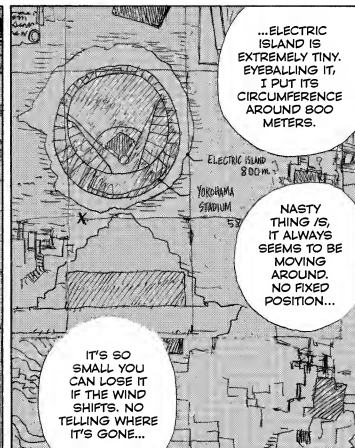
HOWEVER, IT ALWAYS TRANSITS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE OGASAWARA AND IZU ISLANDS.

...RIGHT UNDER WHERE I'M FLYING EVERY DAY.

Pacific Ocean



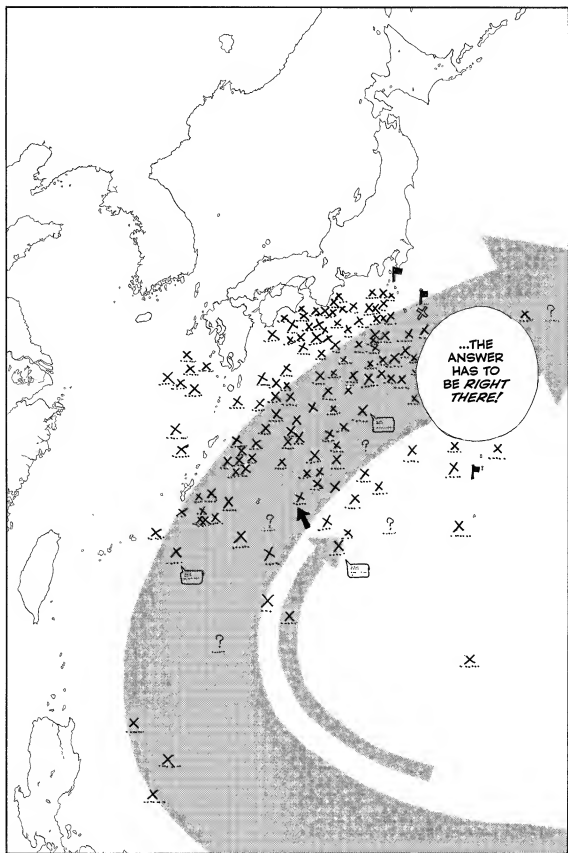
...EXCEPT, THE KEY TO FINDING IT IS THAT ITS MOVEMENTS ARE CYCLICAL.



NASTY THING IS, IT ALWAYS SEEMS TO BE MOVING AROUND. NO FIXED POSITION...

IT'S SO SMALL YOU CAN LOSE IT IF THE WIND SHIFTS. NO TELLING WHERE IT'S GONE...







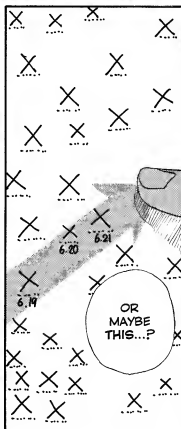
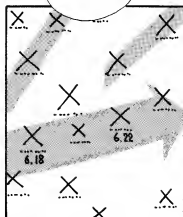
IT'S
BEEN
THREE
YEARS...

...ELECTRIC
ISLAND
SHOULD
BE BACK IN
THESE
WATERS.

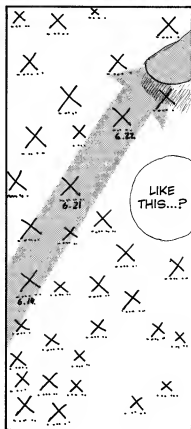
IF I LET
THIS CHANCE
GO BY,
I'LL HAVE TO
WAIT THREE
MORE.



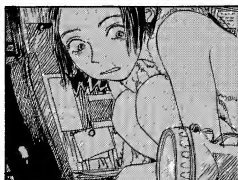
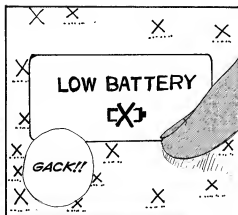
THE
QUESTION
IS, WHAT
ROUTE...?

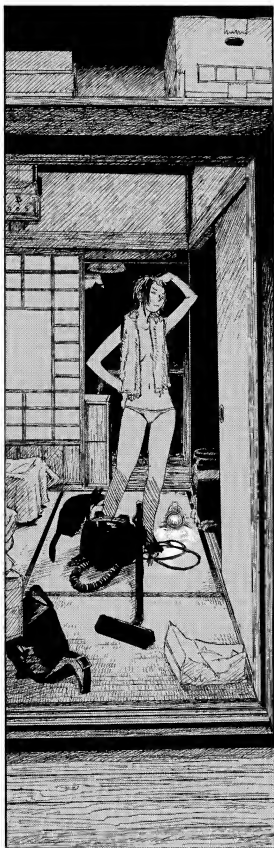


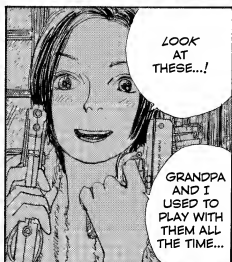
OR
MAYBE
THIS...?

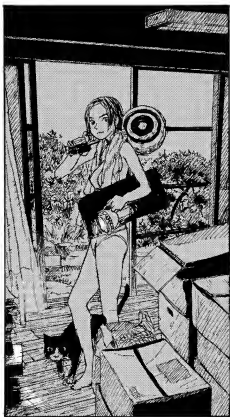


LIKE
THIS...?

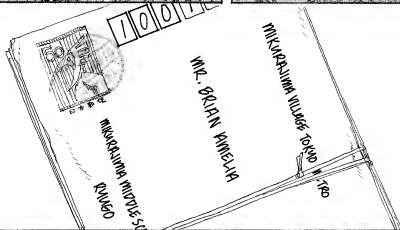




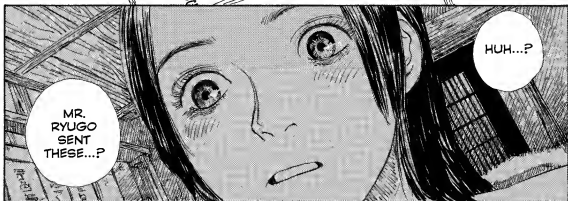








WHO
ARE
THESE
FROM
...?



MR.
RYUGO
SENT
THESE...?

HUH...?





UM...
GOT
ANYTHING
FOR ME?



HEY,
GOOD
MORNING...!



HA
HA...

DECIDE
TO WORK
TODAY,
MIKURA...?

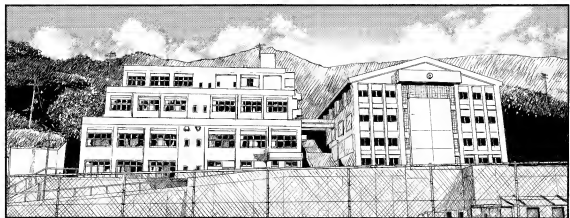
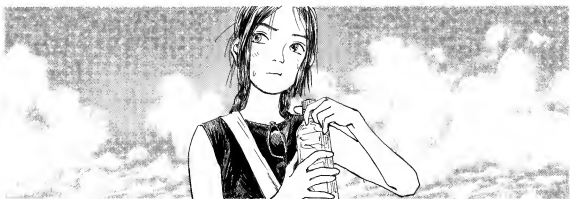
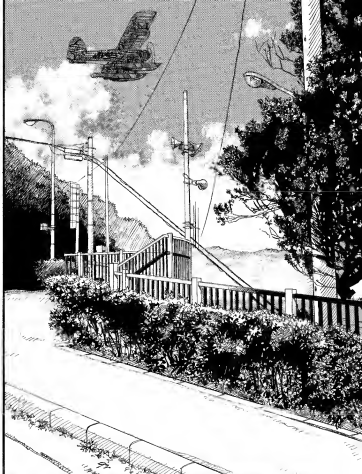
SURE
DO!

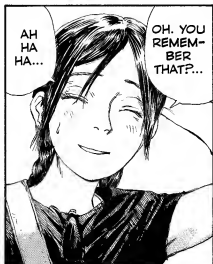


AND, UM...
IF YOU GOT
ANYTHING FOR
MIKURAJIMA,
I'LL TAKE IT.

IT'S
ON MY
WAY.









AH.
RYUGO...

...WE
LOST A
PRECIOUS
PERSON.

Dear Mr. Brian Amelia,

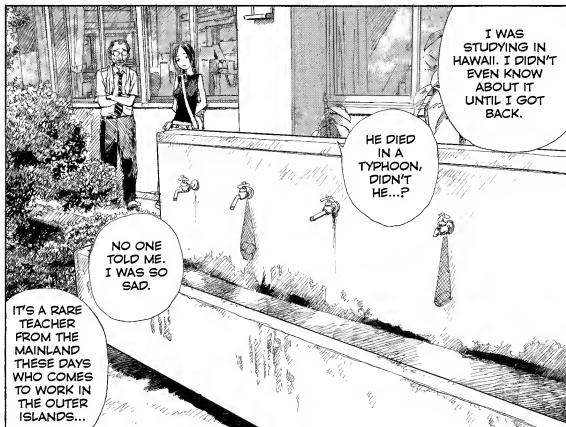
Greetings. I trust that you and your family are all doing well this sunny spring. I am taking the liberty of writing to notify you of some recent changes in my personal situation. I have been assigned to teach at Mikurajima Elementary and Middle School effective April 1 of this year. I ask for your continued guidance and encouragement, and seek your forgiveness for notifying you in this impersonal manner.

*It's been a long time. I'm moving to
Mikurajima this week. Please teach me
more about Is. Electriciteit.*

Sincerely yours.

Ryugo

Ryugo
Naka Ward, Nishitakenomaru
Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture

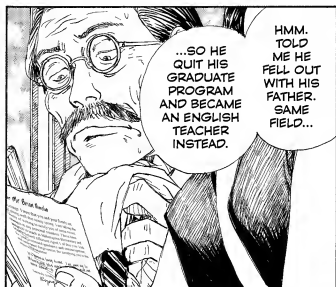
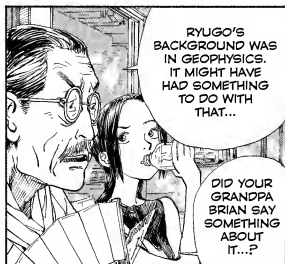
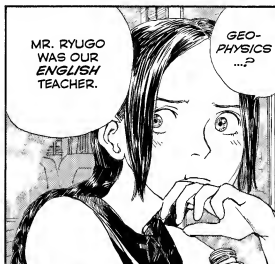
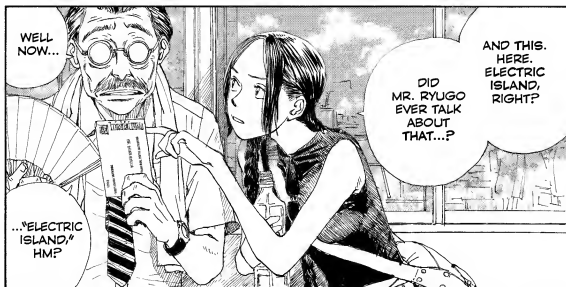


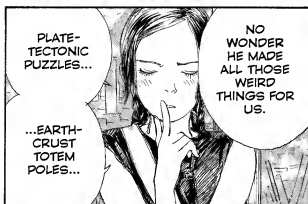
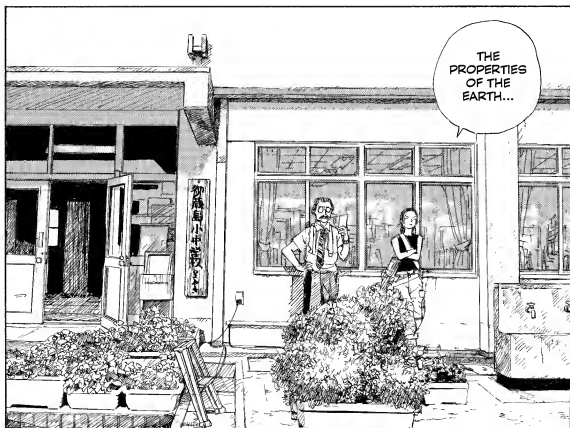
HE DIED
IN A
TYPHOON,
DIDN'T
HE...?

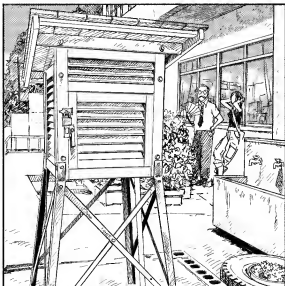
I WAS
STUDYING IN
HAWAII. I DIDN'T
EVEN KNOW
ABOUT IT
UNTIL I GOT
BACK.

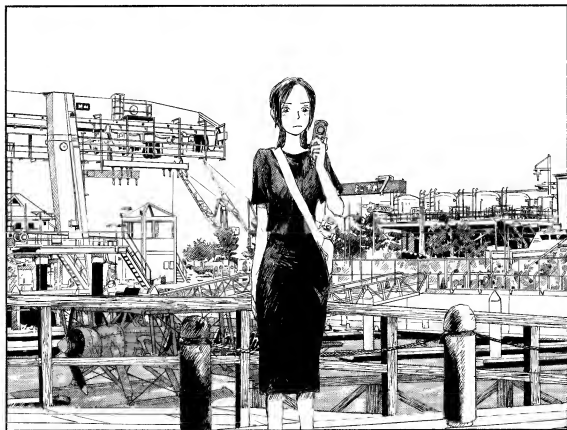
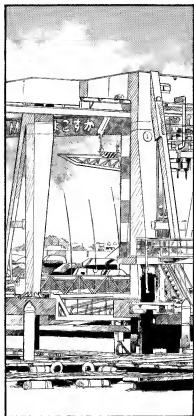
NO ONE
TOLD ME.
I WAS SO
SAD.

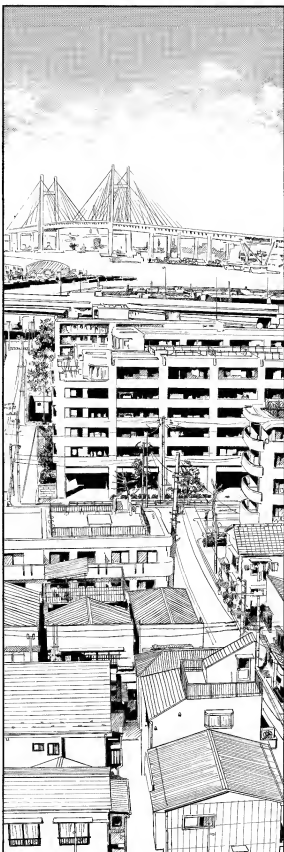
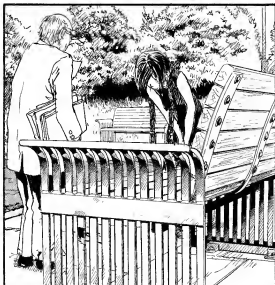
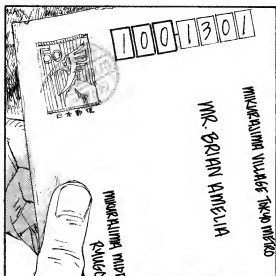
IT'S A RARE
TEACHER
FROM THE
MAINLAND
THESE DAYS
WHO COMES
TO WORK IN
THE OUTER
ISLANDS...

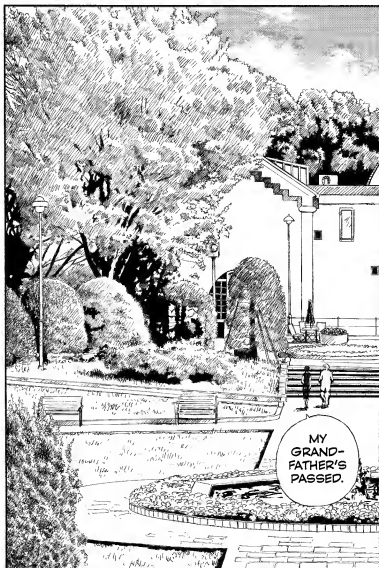
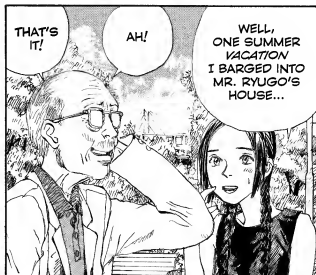
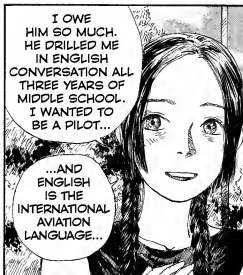












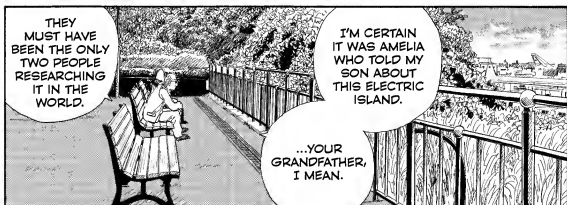


...MR.
RYUGO
WAS ALWAYS
DROPPING
BY.

BACK WHEN
I LIVED WITH
GRANDPA
ON MIKURA-
JIMA...



I
SEE...



THEY
MUST HAVE
BEEN THE ONLY
TWO PEOPLE
RESEARCHING
IT IN THE
WORLD.

I'M CERTAIN
IT WAS AMELIA
WHO TOLD MY
SON ABOUT
THIS ELECTRIC
ISLAND.

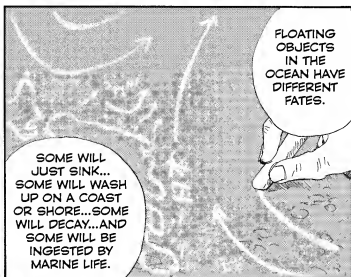
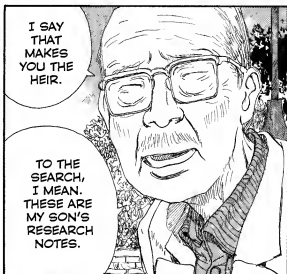
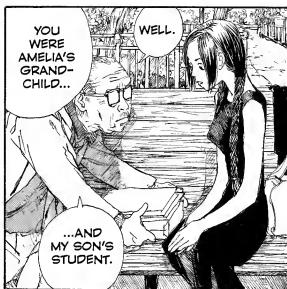
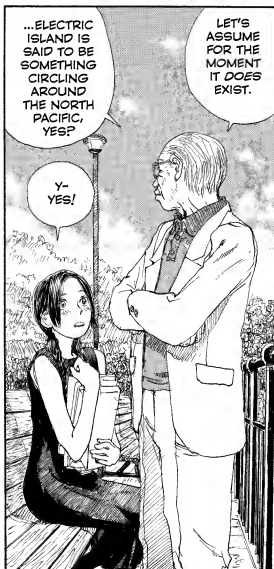
...YOUR
GRANDFATHER,
I MEAN.

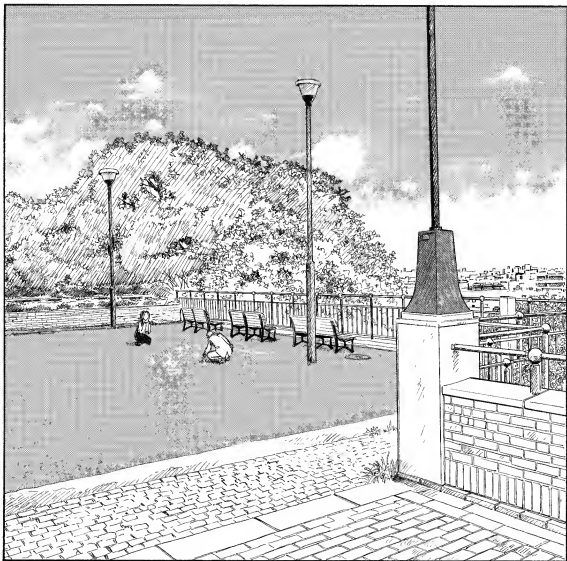


THAT
HAS TO
BE IT. BUT
I NEVER
KNEW
ABOUT IT...

MAYBE
THAT'S WHY
THEY WERE ON
MIKURAJIMA.
TO PURSUE THE
MYSTERY...?

THEY
MET IN THE
OGASAWARAS,
WHEN THEY
WERE
STUDENTS.

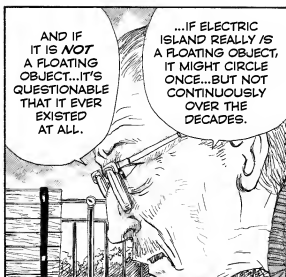
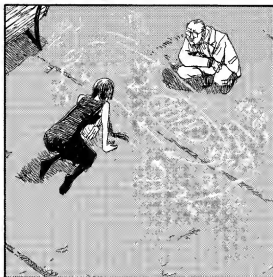




...THEY TEND
TO GRADUALLY
ACCUMULATE
INSIDE THE CALMER
WATERS WITHIN
THE GYRE, WHERE
THEY BREAK
DOWN.

THAT
VAST INTERIOR
ZONE, FULL OF
TINY PARTICLES,
IS CALLED THE
GREAT PACIFIC
GARBAGE PATCH.
NOW, HERE IS
THE POINT...

BUT AS LONG
AS THEY DO FLOAT,
THEIR MOTION IS
GOVERNED BY THE
CURRENTS OF THE
NORTH PACIFIC GYRE.
AND AS THESE
OBJECTS ARE
DRAGGED
ALONG...

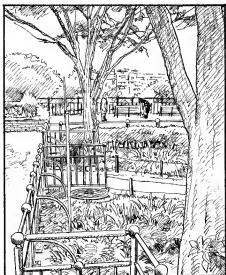


AND IF
IT IS **NOT**
A FLOATING
OBJECT...IT'S
QUESTIONABLE
THAT IT EVER
EXISTED
AT ALL.

...IF ELECTRIC
ISLAND REALLY **IS**
A FLOATING OBJECT,
IT MIGHT CIRCLE
ONCE...BUT NOT
CONTINUOUSLY
OVER THE
DECADES.



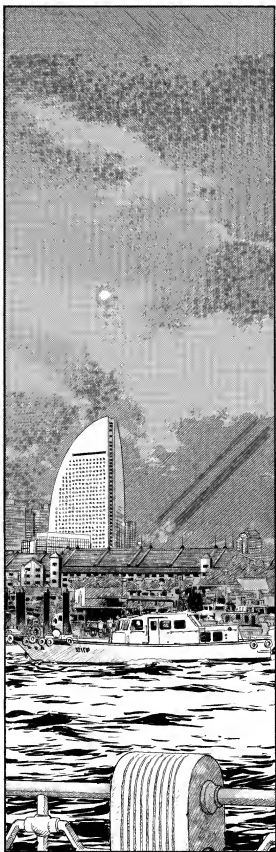
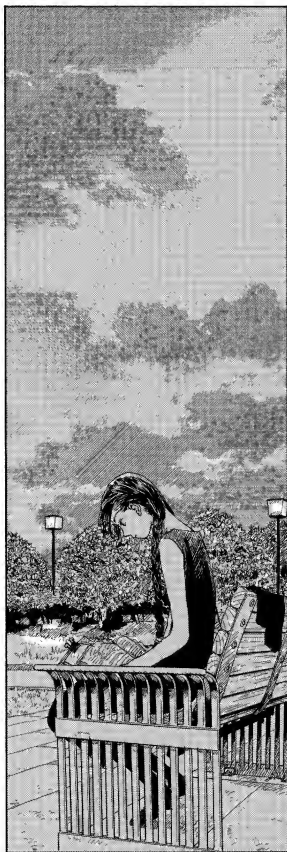
...THANK
YOU,
PROFESSOR.

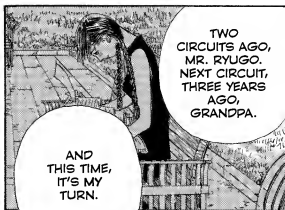
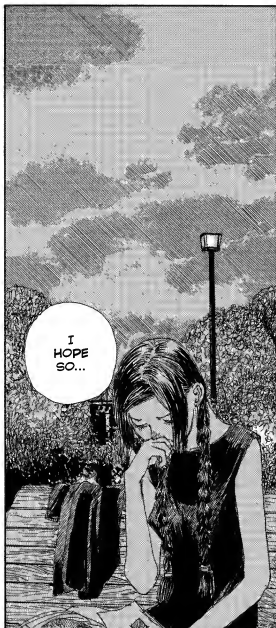


...I FEEL
LIKE YOU'VE
GIVEN ME
MY ENERGY
BACK.

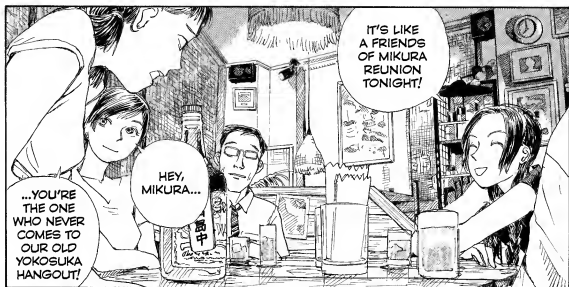
...THANK YOU
FOR NOT
PATRONIZING
ME.

I'D
RATHER HAVE
SOMEONE
LAY OUT THE
FACTS THAN
LIE TO ME...









IT'S LIKE
A FRIENDS
OF MIKURA
REUNION
TONIGHT!

HEY,
MIKURA...

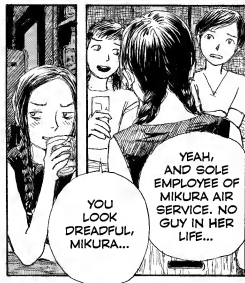
...YOU'RE
THE ONE
WHO NEVER
COMES TO
OUR OLD
YOKOSUKA
HANGOUT!



THEN
I'LL BE
CLOSEST.

THEN
NEXT TIME
DO IT
ON THE
ISLAND,
OKAY...?

SO WHERE
ARE YOU
LIVING NOW?
STILL
FLYING?



YOU
LOOK
DREADFUL,
MIKURA...

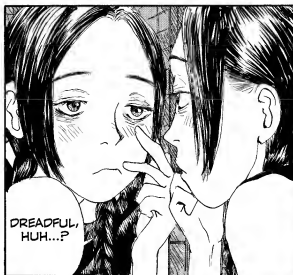
YEAH,
AND SOLE
EMPLOYEE OF
MIKURA AIR
SERVICE. NO
GUY IN HER
LIFE...



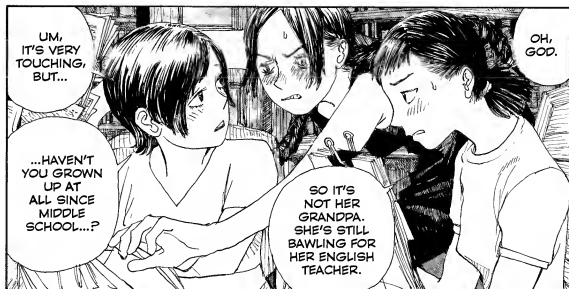
TWO
HOUSES
ALL TO
YOURSELF
?!

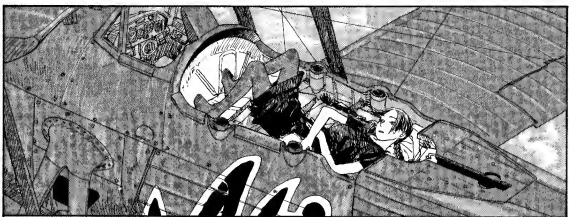
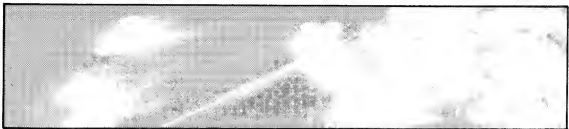
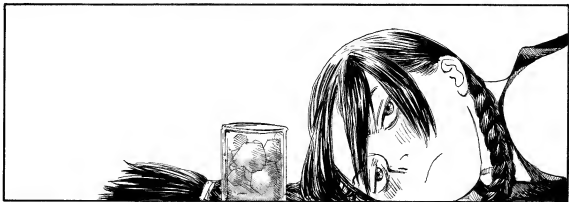
WELL,
SHE IS A
COMPANY
PRESIDENT...

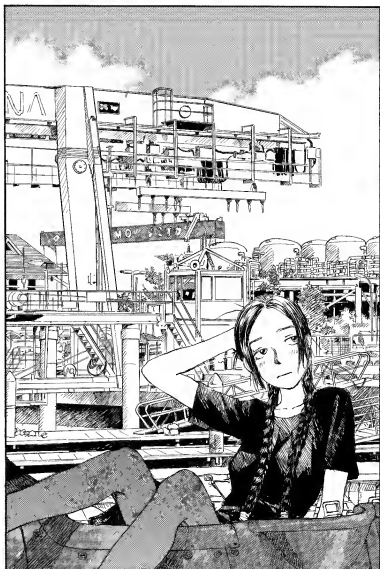
...I GO BACK
AND FORTH.
THE HOUSE IN
OSHIMA, AND
THEN OUT TO
GRANDDAD'S
PLACE ON
HAHAJIMA.

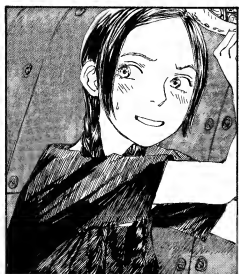
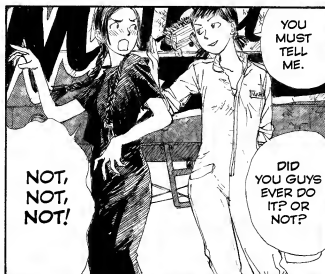
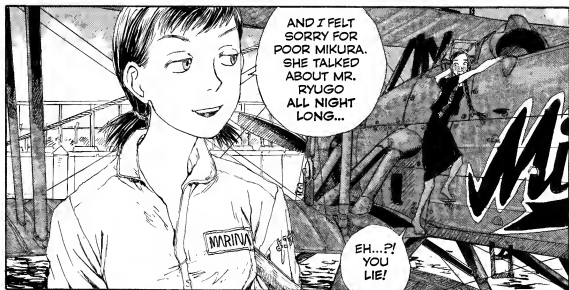




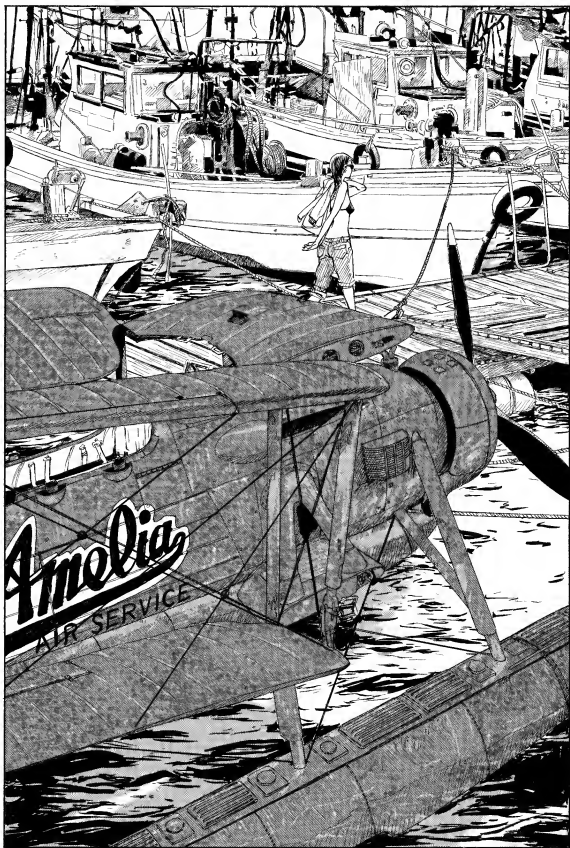


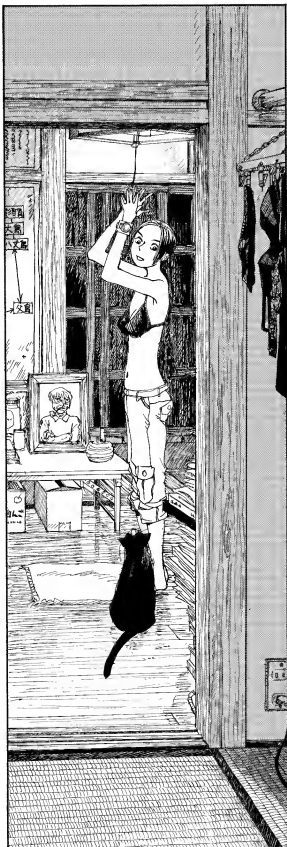
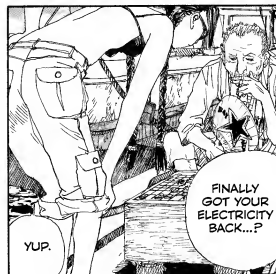


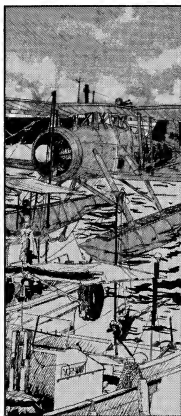
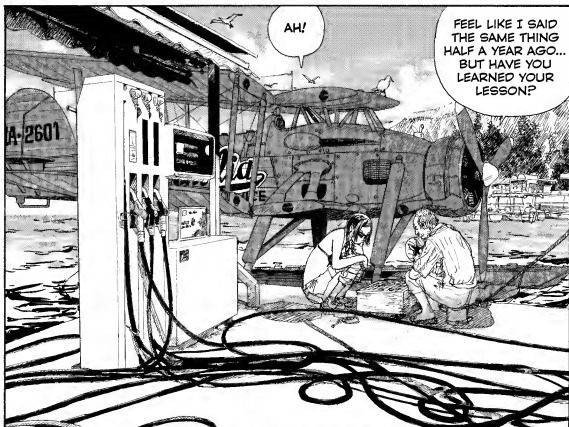


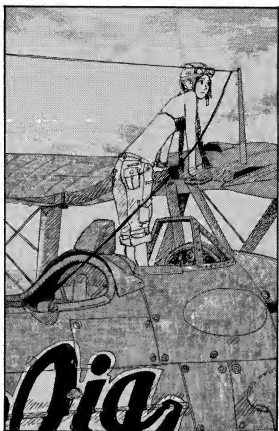
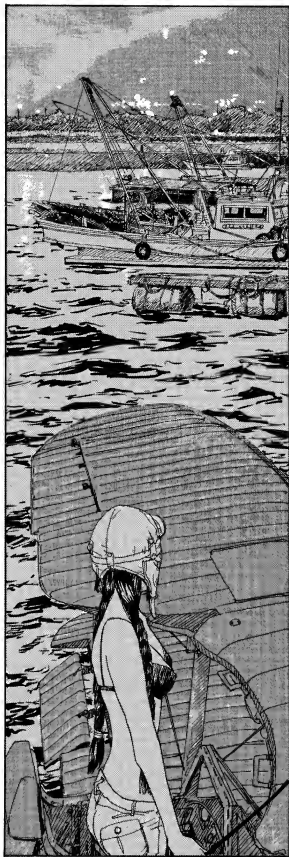






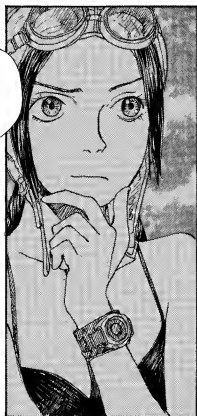


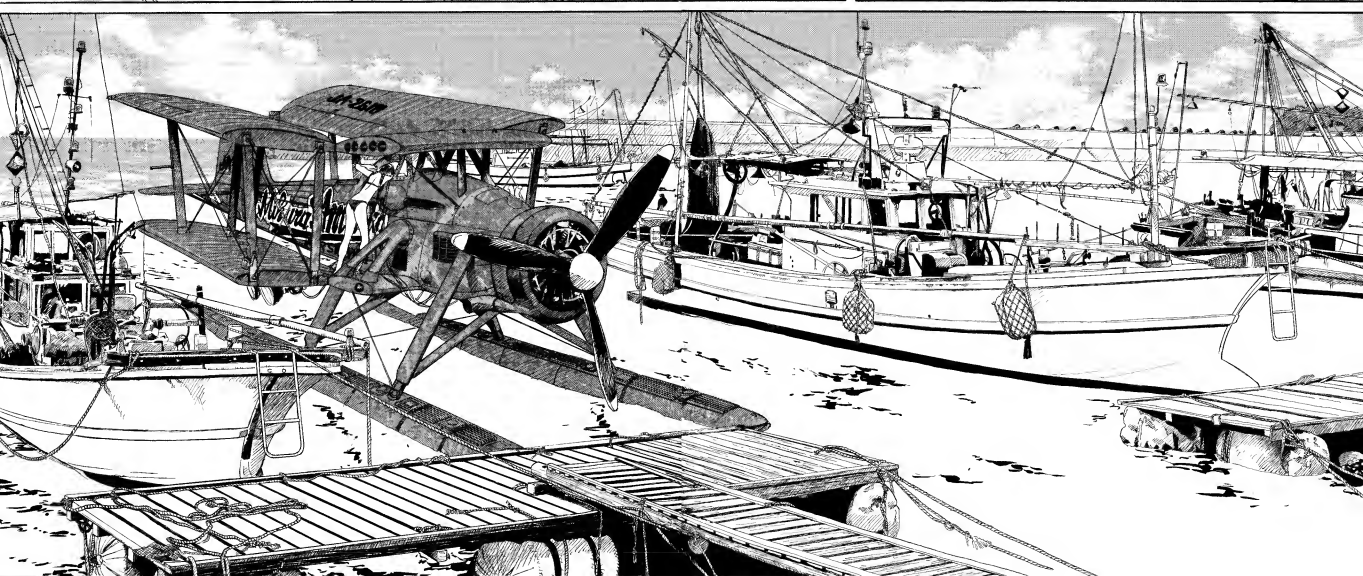




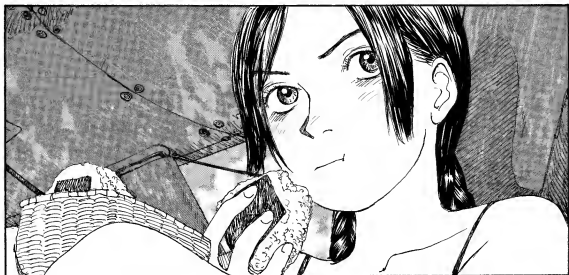
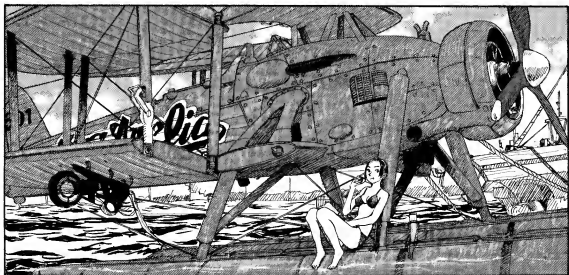
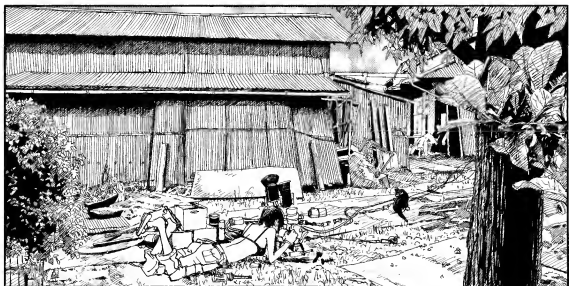


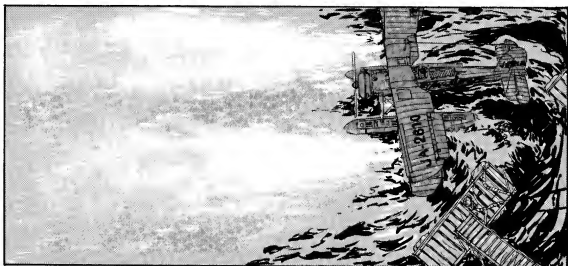
RIGHT...
THERE
WAS
THAT.

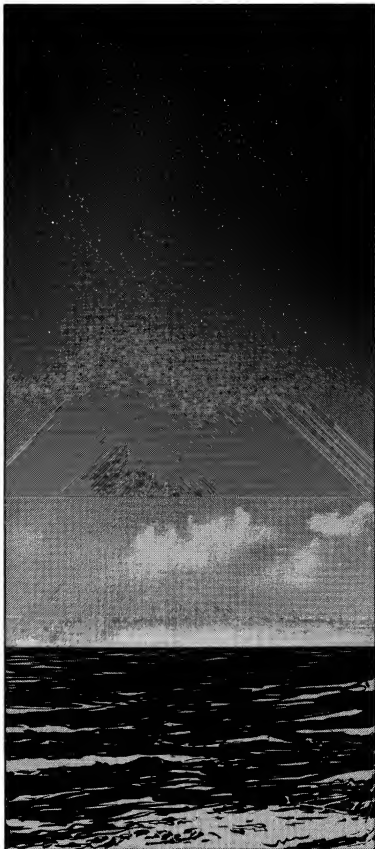
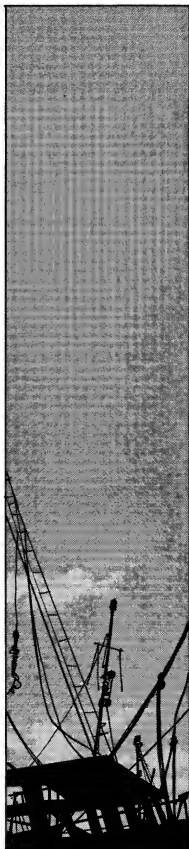


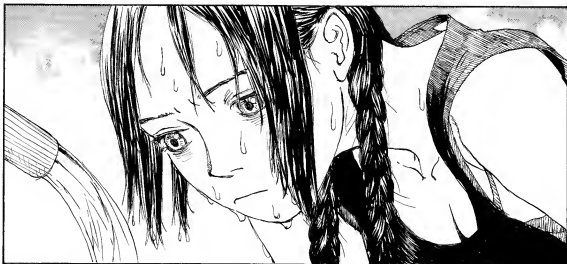


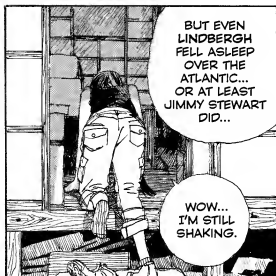




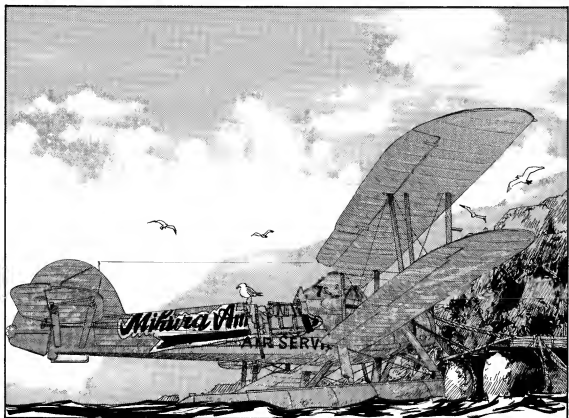
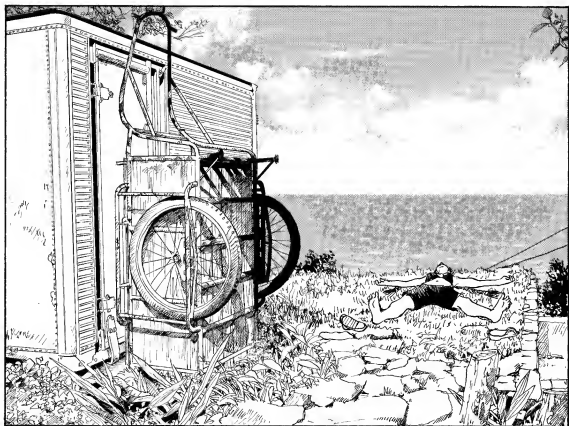






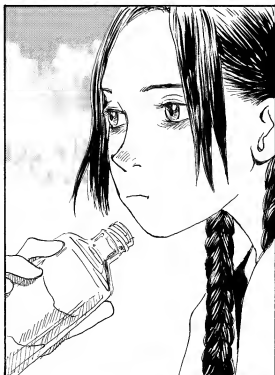
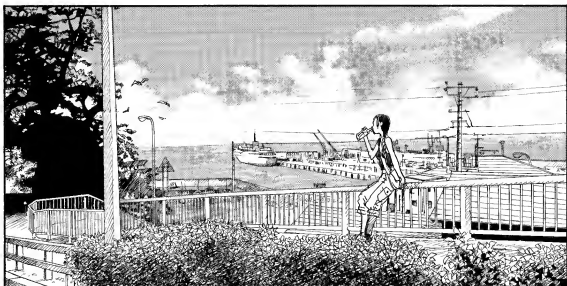


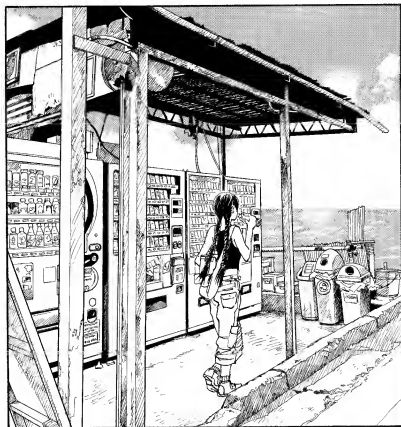
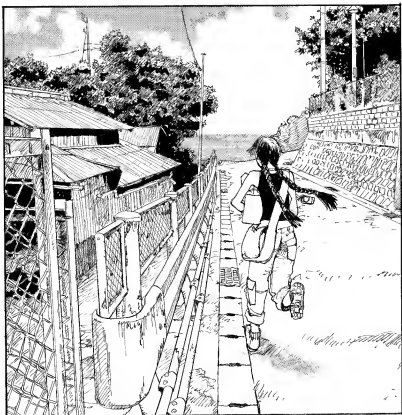














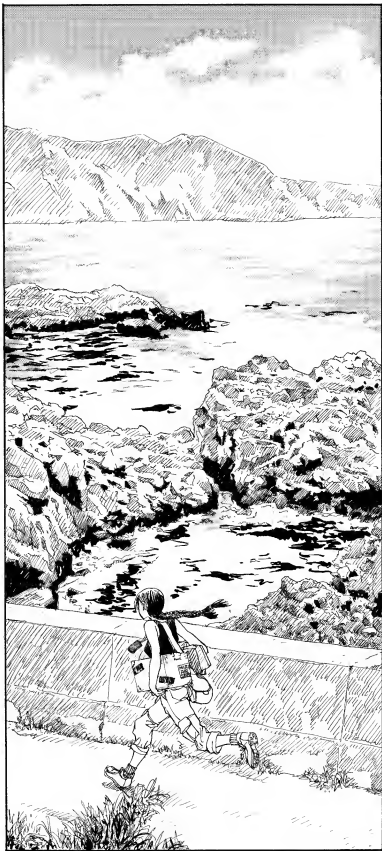
DO
YOUR
JOB.

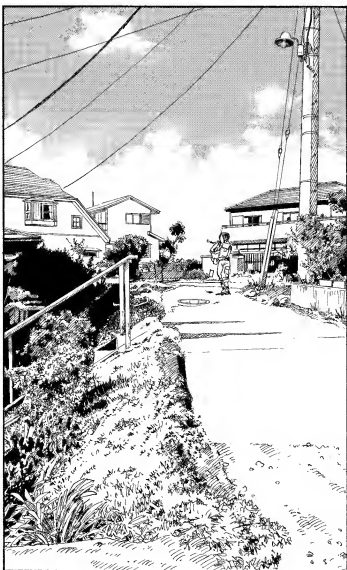
IF THIS
YEAR'S
A BUST,
WAIT THREE
MORE.

IF
THAT'S
A BUST,
WAIT
ANOTHER
THREE.

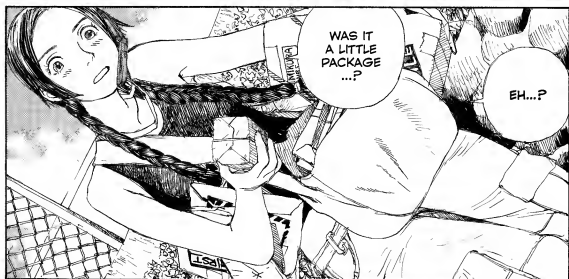
BUT
LIKE HE
SAID...
I NEVER
LET GO.

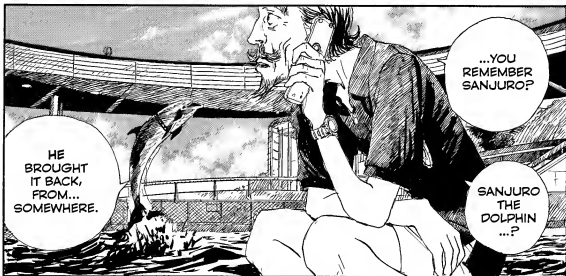
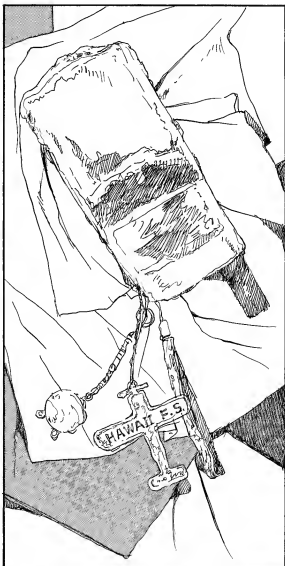


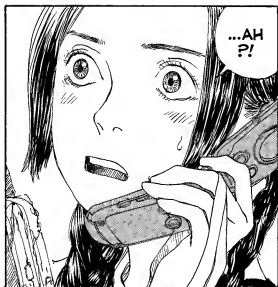


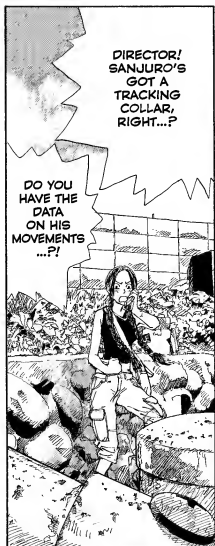


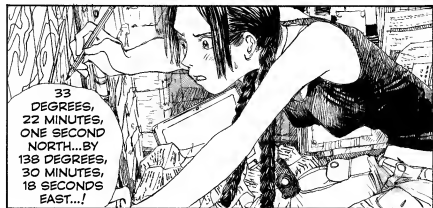
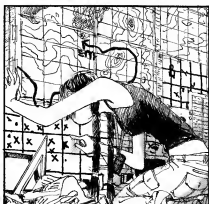
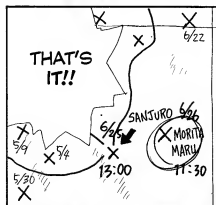
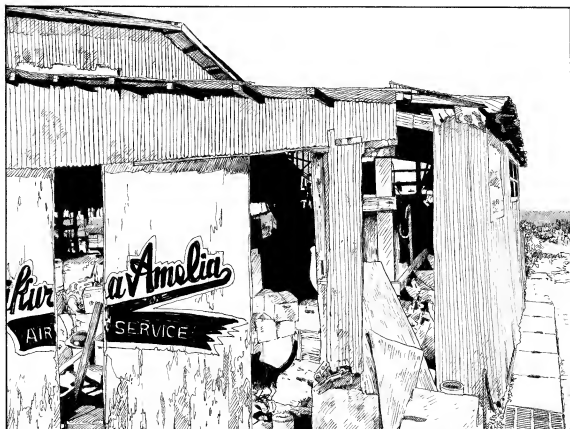




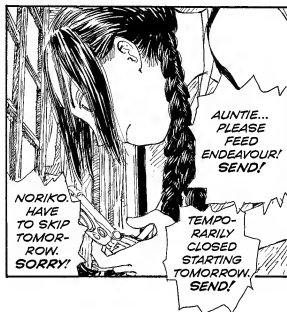


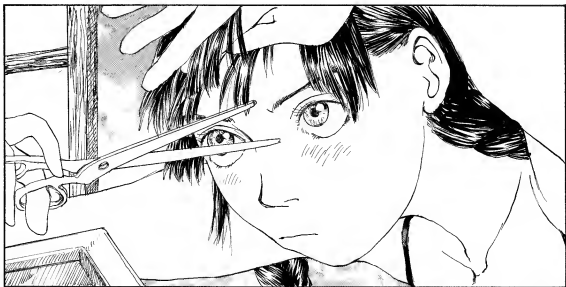


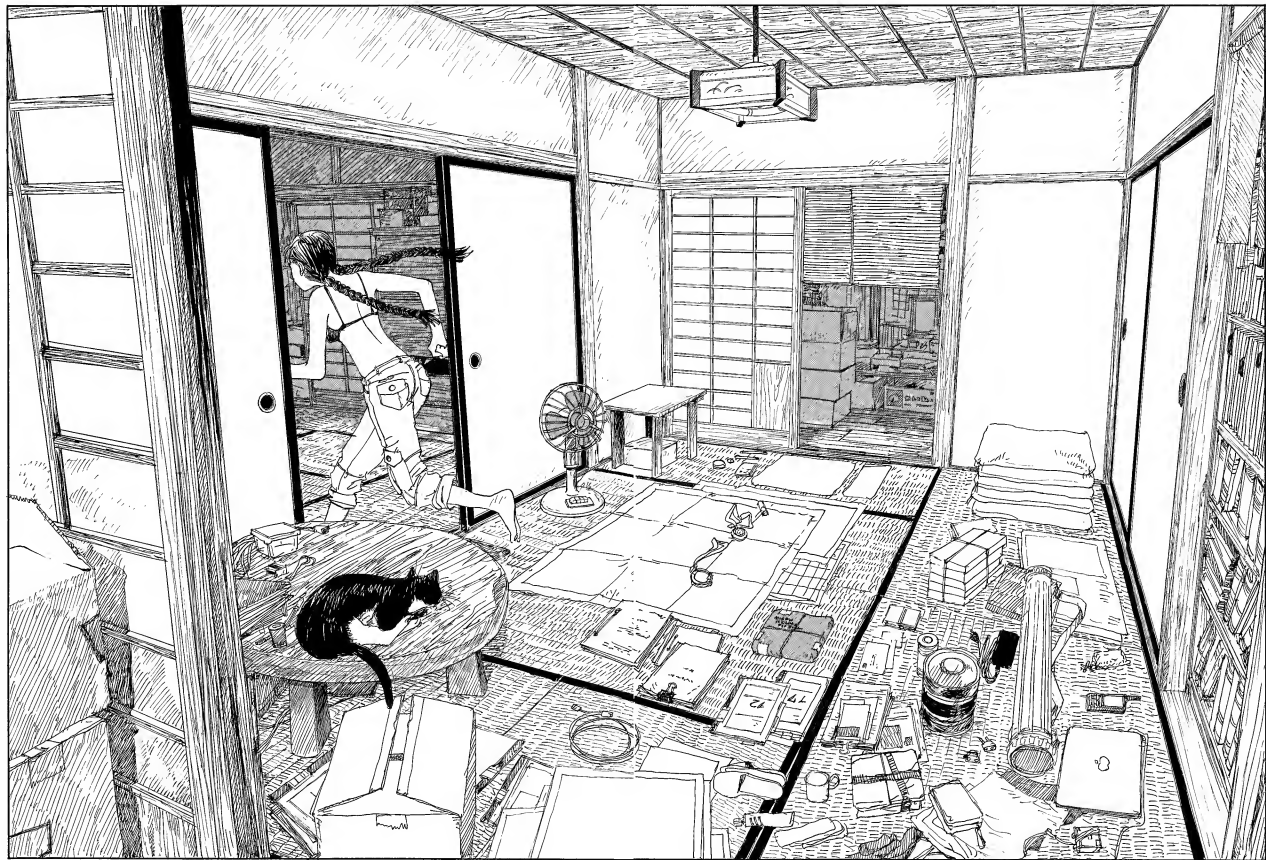


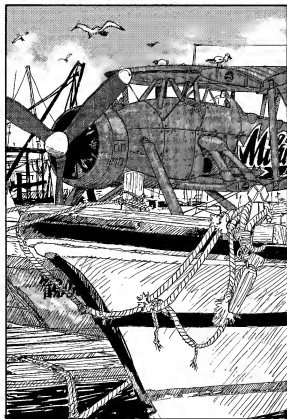


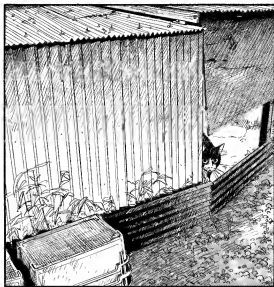








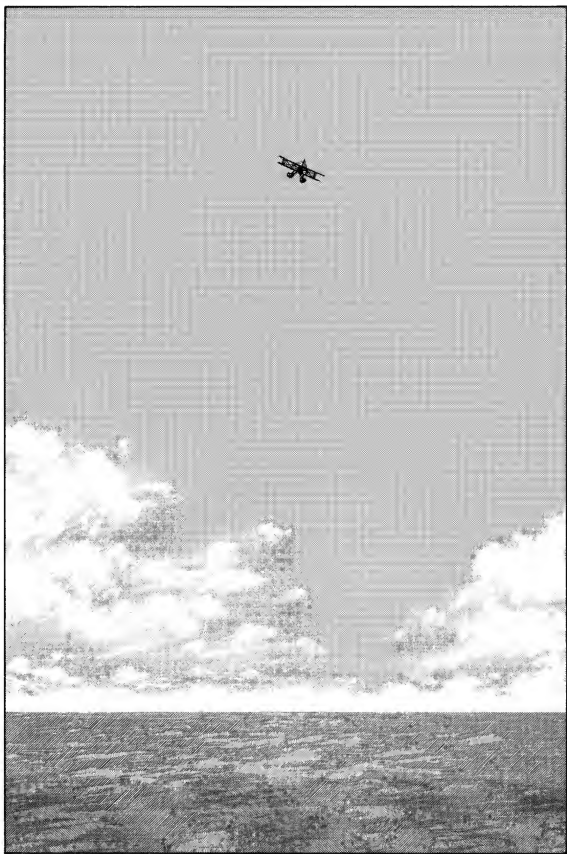












To Be Continued.

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WANDERING ISLAND Volume 1

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NOTES ON WANDERING ISLAND

There are 6,852 islands that make up Japan, but when most people (including most Japanese) think of their country, they picture only the largest four—Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu—where over 98 percent of the Japanese population lives. Most of the remaining less than 2 percent live on Okinawa, four hundred miles distant from the main four, lying at the end of the Ryukyu archipelago that stretches in a southwesterly chain from Kyushu to Taiwan.

The tiny fraction left over out of Japan's 127 million people—even in an era of demographic decline, it is still the tenth most populous country in the world—live largely in the scattered chains that are the backdrop of *Wandering Island*, the Izu and Ogasawara archipelagos. Whereas the Ryukyus arc toward Taiwan (and thus, toward the channels of commerce and industry in eastern Asia), the Izu and Ogasawara Islands end up out where the action isn't, six hundred miles more or less south into the open Pacific.

About one and a half million people live in the Ryukyu archipelago; by contrast, less than thirty thousand live in the Izu and Ogasawaras. Okinawa is well served by air transport; despite its small population relative to the rest of Japan, it has the nation's seventh-busiest airport, with direct flights to multiple destinations in China, Taiwan, and South Korea. The situation in the Izu and Ogasawara Islands is rather different: the largest airport, Oshima (seen from the air on page 11 and on the ground on pages 120–121; Mikura is calling their tower on page 100), is the kind where you never have to worry about getting to the wrong gate or wrong terminal, because there's only ever one flight, from one airline, going one place, arriving or departing, at a time.

I'm sure there are readers with small-town connections who use airports like that and can picture the scene. The one I'm personally familiar with is Pangborn Memorial in Wenatchee, WA—a place linked somehow with the old-time aviation spirit of this manga, as it's named for Washington native Clyde Pangborn, who with Hugh Herndon made the first nonstop trans-Pacific flight in 1931, taking off from Misawa, Japan (where a replica of their plane, *Miss Veedol*, can still be found), and landing in Wenatchee. Pangborn has just three arrivals and three departures, all on the same airline (Horizon) and to and from the same city (Seattle).

Oshima Airport's much like that. Those two planes you see Mikura walking toward on page 120, and then hanging around on page 121, are *the* two planes at the airport, at least as far as scheduled passenger service is concerned, with four arrivals and four departures each day, in each case to Chofu, one of the smaller local airports in the Tokyo metro area (in fact, Chofu is only about four miles from the famous Ghibli Museum). In other words, the world of *Wandering Island* is too small time to be served by the major Tokyo airports, Narita and Haneda. There actually was until last year a jet service from Haneda to Oshima operated by one of Japan's biggest carriers, ANA, but it turned out there simply wasn't enough traffic to warrant it. ANA had been expecting the 120-seat Boeing 737 used for the route to fly only half full, but in fact it ended up being only 10 percent full.

The modest planes you see on pages 120–121, then, are much more appropriate to the local economy; they're Dornier 228s, twin turboprops seating nineteen people. Again, Kenji Tsuruta (as part of his strong eye for local detail seen throughout this manga) is depicting what you would actually see walking out on the tarmac at Oshima Airport, and he has based their tail livery on that of the real operators of these planes, using the flying fish logo of New Central Airservice (except where the actual planes have an "NCA," he's placed a "WKK").

Along with the map on page 2, this discussion of the story's setting is meant to help the reader picture the very different side of Japan depicted in *Wandering Island* and the peculiar fact that it all starts not very far from Tokyo—which is, after all, the largest area of urban sprawl in the world and the original visual inspiration for *Blade Runner*. It's just a twenty-five-minute flight on those prop planes from Tokyo to Oshima. In American terms, it's a bit like the relationship between Los Angeles County and Catalina—except, imagine if Catalina was only the first and closest of a string of inhabited islands that went hundreds of miles out into the ocean, as is the case with the relationship between Tokyo and the Izu and Ogasawara Islands. If you look closely at the envelope on page 119, you'll see it's addressed to "Mikurajima Village, Tokyo Metro"—as odd as it may seem, administratively all these little islands are considered to be part of greater Tokyo.

It also helps us understand the role a one-person business like the Amelia Air Service, romanticized as it is, might play in the world of

Wandering Island. Mikura's conversation with the WKK pilot on page 121 reflects Tsuruta's knowledge of this setting; she says she'll take anything he has that's going to Mikurajima (which in 2015 had a population of 341—as you might expect, the implication is that Mikura was named for her home), one of the Izu Islands depicted on the page 2 map that the real-life New Central Airservice does not fly to. In other words, Mikura's economic niche is to fulfill the jobs too tiny even for the small-time regular air freight business her islands support—subcontracting for them and doing odd deliveries of her own on the side.

It was translator Dana Lewis who identified Mikura's seaplane (as well as so many other details in this manga, of course). Dana comments, "We may never know how Mikura and Grandpa Brian got their hands on a Fairey Swordfish, but it is a distinguished bird indeed. First entering service in 1936, the Swordfish, with its huge Bristol Pegasus radial engine, could fly 550 miles. It operated both from British naval and merchant aircraft carriers as a torpedo bomber and reconnaissance plane; most famously of all, it was a Swordfish wing from the HMS *Ark Royal* that managed to put two torpedoes into the German battleship *Bismarck* on May 26, 1941, jamming its rudder and dooming Hitler's attempts to use his surface fleet against the Allied supply routes." The Swordfish, incidentally, was nicknamed the "Stringbag" by its crews for its ability to carry seemingly any kind of weaponry—except, where the plane once slung torpedoes, rockets, bombs, or depth charges, Mikura slings cargo, as seen in the opening color pages of the story.

Not seen but alluded to several times in this manga are a second, much farther chain of inhabited islands, the Ogasawaras. To give some idea of how far away they are, the map on page 2 would need an extra three pages folding out just to reach them. Yet, again, Japanese people live here, and Mikura delivers here; as mentioned on page 141, she also commutes here, having evidently inherited a house her grandpa, Brian Amelia, owned on Hahajima, one of the two populated islands in the Ogasawaras.

Out here, Mikura has the sky much to herself; there is no regular air passenger service to the Ogasawaras, and only one regular passenger ship, the *Ogasawara Maru*, that sails from Tokyo once a week (and every three days during the summer)—it's a 25½-hour trip. What brings people out to the Ogasawaras? In a word, nature: the islands are a UNESCO

World Heritage Site, their isolation making them an important place to study evolutionary processes (they have sometimes been described as the “Galápagos of Asia”). Their isolation from the rest of their country has ironically also meant that they have sometimes been closer to the currents of world history than they have Japan’s.

Chichijima, the other inhabited island of the group (where the *Ogasawara Maru* puts into port), is where the elder president George Bush was shot down as a young naval aviator in 1944; a visitor’s guide notes the locale and that he was the only survivor of his bombing raid, without going into details as to why—his other fellow aviators were captured, executed, and in some cases, eaten (and not out of hunger) by Japanese officers, an incident recounted in James Bradley’s 2003 book *Flyboys*. Perhaps the most infamous island of that entire brutal era, Iwo Jima, is just 125 miles SSW of Mikura’s house on Hahajima; she could get there in her plane in less than an hour, although access is restricted—today, as before the war, Iwo Jima is a Japanese military base, used from time to time also by the US Navy.

But the Ogasawaras have a still more strange and contentious history than this, making them a suitable backdrop for the mysteries, as well as taken-for-granted differences, of *Wandering Island*. Lying so far as they do from the main islands (especially back in the days when journeys there had to be made by sailing ships, rather than a diesel-powered boat like the *Ogasawara Maru*), they had first been discovered in the sixteenth century not by a Japanese, but by a Spanish explorer, Bernardo de la Torre; indeed, the shogunate may have learned of their existence through the Europeans.

Whereas it’s common in manga for a Japanese character of ethnically mixed background to have that fact explained or remarked upon, the reader will have noticed that no one in the story comments on the fact that Mikura’s last name is Amelia, or that her grandfather was named Brian. That may very well be because a considerable number of people from the Ogasawaras are of Western ancestry; in the decades before they were formally annexed by Japan in the 1860s, a Massachusetts settler named Nathaniel Savory established what he hoped would become a formal American colony on the then-uninhabited islands.

Commodore Perry made a stop at the settlement on the way to his famous 1853 mission to Tokyo Bay to forcibly open Japan to American

trade—since 1641 official Japanese trade with the West had been conducted exclusively via the Dutch, through a small artificial island, Dejima, constructed as a restricted depot in Nagasaki harbor. This is, of course, the same Dejima referenced in Ryugo's cryptic notes on page 138, and mention of a Dutch artificial island can't help but be linked to a clue some readers will have also noticed. "Electric Island," the wandering island of the title of this story, is written *Is. Electriciteit* on the mysterious package on page 23 that begins Mikura's quest—that is, written not only in Dutch, but in old-fashioned Dutch; the modern way to write the word in Dutch is with a *k*, *Elektriciteit*.

Tsuruta's use of "Is." to denote an island with a Dutch name may at first seem off, given that "island" in Dutch is *eiland*. Dutch geographical terms from their age of exploration and empire show different usages. An excellent source is Jakob Roggeveen's map (published in 1724) of his 1721-22 journey in search of *Terra Australis*—not the continent we know today as Australia, which had already been discovered (in fact, the Dutch had claimed it as *Nieuw Holland*), but the great southern land explorers had believed for centuries must exist at the bottom of the world—what we now know as Antarctica. On Roggeveen's map, the Solomon Islands, for example, are indeed listed as *Salomons Eil*: (presumably *Eil: for Eilanden*), but one can also observe a variety of ways to denote islands, including *I.* (both before and after the name), *I.S.*, *I.S.*, and *IS*. I wondered if perhaps *Eil:* or some variant might be used for islands with Dutch names (as opposed to, say, Spanish ones), but the map also has such notations as *I.S. Pieter*, *I. Amsterdam*, and *I. Rotterdam*. Perhaps it simply reflects a less standardized era, or maybe the co-existence of Latinate and Germanic terms in an era when Latin was still a common literary and scientific language (for example, the map uses the Latin-Dutch phrase *Tropicus Canceri of Noorder Zons keerskring*, whereas in modern Dutch you could simply write *Kreeftskeerkring* to mean "Tropic of Cancer.")

Other allusions to Holland's past history of colonies and seagoing trade are found scribbled on page 138, such as "1823 Siebold," a reference to Philipp Franz von Siebold, a German-born doctor and botanist who was posted to Dejima in 1823 (and while there fathered the woman who would become the first female Japanese doctor of Western medicine, Ine Kusumoto). Ryugo's note on the "Amboyne Massacre"

refers to a once-infamous 1623 affair in Indonesia—Swift alludes to it in *Gulliver's Travels*—where, in what sounds like a clichéd cyberpunk scenario seventeenth-century-style, corporate agents of the Dutch East India Company tortured and executed a group of rival English merchants and the Japanese *ronin* mercenaries (!) working for them. There's even a note, "December 1642 Staten Land," referring to the first European discovery, by Dutch explorer Abel Tasman, of the Maori-settled islands today known as New Zealand or Aotearoa. Dutch roots in Asia are deep, the legacy of the same golden age of merchant prosperity from which Rembrandt took his commissions—in fact, it is known from his auction records that Rembrandt owned a set of samurai armor, imported all the way from Dejima.

More playfully (but perhaps befitting the spirit of the manga), Tsuruta also references Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* on page 138 with the note "The shoulder of Spy-Glass Hill, 7.5 to North-Northeast." We're eager to see where creator Kenji Tsuruta will take all these mysteries in *Wandering Island* Volume 2. Tsuruta is a manga artist with a famously limited output, having completed perhaps a dozen volumes since his professional debut in 1986. In part this is because of his other career as a science-fiction illustrator, a field in which he has won the Seiun—sometimes considered to be the Japanese equivalent to the Hugo, one of English-language SF's top awards—three times, most recently in 2013.

Japanese novels Kenji Tsuruta has illustrated include one by the creator of Dark Horse's *The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service* and *MPD-Psycho*, Eiji Otsuka, entitled *Natsu no kyoushitsu* (meaning "summer camp" in the sense of a summer educational program), and Hiroshi Mori's series *The Sky Crawlers*, later adapted into a 2008 anime film by Mamoru Oshii. Foreign novels in Japanese translation Tsuruta has illustrated include Vernor Vinge's *Zones of Thought* series and an edition of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four*, released to mark publisher Tokyo Sogensha's fiftieth anniversary.

Anime fans may also know Tsuruta's work from GAINAX's 2002 series *Magical Shopping Arcade Abenobashi*, for which he did the character designs, or for the two anime based on Tsuruta's own manga *Spirit of Wonder* (*Spirit of Wonder: Miss China's Ring* and *Spirit of Wonder: Scientific Boys Club*). Tsuruta's own limited output as an artist has not

diminished his respect in the industry, evidenced by his recent participation as a judge in Kodansha's seasonal competition to select new manga talent for the famed *Afternoon*, the home magazine of *Wandering Island*—and other titles Dark Horse has published over the years, including *Oh My Goddess!*, *Blade of the Immortal*, and *Gunsmith Cats*.

Those manga, as well as Tsuruta's own *Spirit of Wonder*, were first brought to Dark Horse over two decades ago thanks to the efforts of the late Toren Smith, cofounder of Studio Proteus and one of the handful of pioneers who founded the English-language manga industry. As Dark Horse celebrates its thirtieth anniversary this year, we are honored to publish Kenji Tsuruta once again, appropriately enough through the contributions of two other people strongly associated with Studio Proteus—cofounder with Toren (and this book's translator) Dana Lewis, and letterer and retouch artist Susie Lee—the very same duo who adapted *Oh My Goddess!* for many years. We are also honored by the publication of this book to remember our friend and inspiration Toren, and to show that this remembrance will move us forward.

—CGH





Mikura Amelia is a free-spirited young woman who lives alone with her cat and operates an air delivery service. When her beloved grandfather passes away, she discovers he left her an undelivered parcel, addressed to an island that doesn't exist . . . or does it? To find the truth, Mikura flies off in search of the Wandering Island!